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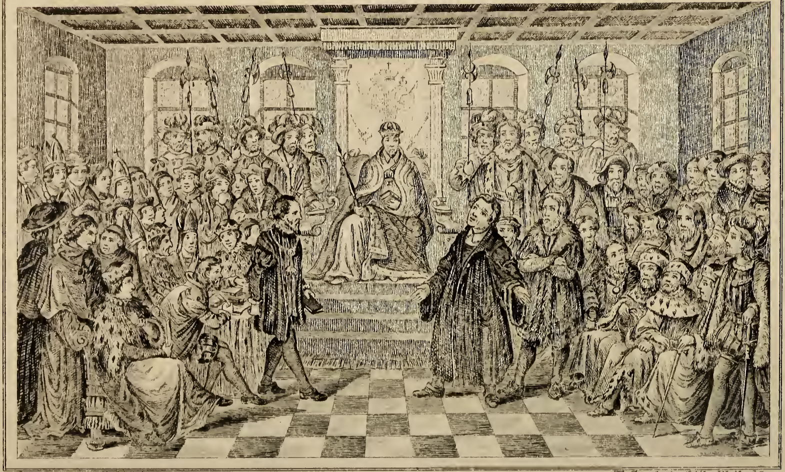

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LUTHER BEFORE the EMPEROR CHARLES V, at the DIET of WORMS, A.D. 1521.

MORNING OF THE REFORMATION.

BY ENOCH POND,

PROFESSOR IN THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY,
BANGOR.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
1871
CITY OF WASHINGTON

WRITTEN FOR THE AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION, AND
REVISED BY THE COMMITTEE OF PUBLICATION.

AMERICAN SUNDAY-SCHOOL UNION.
PHILADELPHIA:
No. 146 CHESTNUT STREET.

1842

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PREFACE.

The Protestant Reformation was one of those great and surprising events which attract the notice of succeeding generations, and mark the periods in which they occur as epochs in the history of the world. In many particulars, this event resembled the first triumph of Christianity; and among all the revolutions which the earth has witnessed, was second only to that in point of interest and importance. It sundered the chains of debasing ignorance and inveterate superstition. It broke the yoke of the most grinding moral and spiritual oppression. It unlocked the long-sealed fountains of knowledge, and gave the Bible to the nations. In the course of a few years, it enlightened and emancipated half Europe. Nor was its influence confined to the period when it occurred. Its blessed results have rolled down the tide of time, in a constantly widening and increasing current, from generation to generation, and they will continue thus to roll, till time shall be no more.

In all true history the hand of God is more or less visible; but never have his power and grace been more strikingly displayed than in the series of events connected with the Protestant Reformation. By a succession of remarkable, though often mysterious, providences, he prepared the way for the purification of his church. It was his providence and grace which raised up and qualified the individuals by whom this work was chiefly conducted; which protected and sustained them in the midst of trials and dangers; and which brought, at length, the mighty enterprise in which they were engaged to a successful issue. At every stage in the progress of the work, we find these individuals humbly looking to God for direction; and in every season of encouragement and deliverance, they devoutly ascribed to him the glory. Let those who come after them, and who read the story and reap the fruits of their toils and perils, do the same.

The object of the writer in the following history (as the intelligent reader must perceive) has not been so much to be profound or original, as to be instructive and entertaining. As he writes more especially for the benefit of the young, he has endeavoured to give to the narrative somewhat of a scenic character, and to embody as much of stirring incident as was consistent with the necessary brevity of the work.

In preparing these pages, the author has had access to nearly all the histories of the Reformation, both Romish and Protestant. He has been chiefly indebted, however, to the new history of President D'Aubigné, whose course of narrative he has more generally followed, and whose language he has, in some instances, adopted.

He now commits the work to the beloved youth of our land, in the hope and prayer that it may tend to open their eyes to the errors, the evils and dangers of that system of darkness with which the Romish church has covered so large a portion of this world, and may deeply impress them with a sense of obligation to those often traduced but ever memorable reformers, who braved for us the terrors of ecclesiastical tyranny and persecution, and at the expense of whose toils, sacrifices and blood, we have received the Bible, and nearly all those blessings, whether civil or religious, which we now enjoy. Next to the apostles and evangelists of the primitive church, *the Reformers of the sixteenth century* should be remembered with gratitude and honour by Christians in all coming time.

Theological Seminary,
Bangor, 1842.

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MORNING

OF

THE REFORMATION.

CHAPTER I.

Events introductory and preparatory to the Reformation—Labours of Wickliffe and his followers—Removal of the seat of the popedom from Rome to Avignon—Schism of the West—Gradual revival of learning from the eleventh to the sixteenth centuries—Art of printing—Labours of learned men not connected with the Reformers—Forms of government in Germany and Switzerland—Death of the Emperor Maximilian—Frederic the Wise, Elector of Saxony—Engrossing occupations of Charles V.—Dreadful corruptions in the church of Rome—Fruitless attempts at reformation—No hope remaining but in the power of God.

BEFORE entering directly on a history of the Reformation, it may be proper to notice some of those providential occurrences which *went* *before it* and *prepared the way for it;* which rendered the world so eminently *ripe* for reformation, and so ready to aid in promoting its triumphs.

The first of these preparatory dispensations to which I shall direct attention, was the preaching and labours of Wickliffe* and his followers. John Wickliffe died ninety-nine years before Luther was born. Although it was his lot to live in an age of thick darkness, and to labour under circumstances of peculiar disadvantage, yet so vigorously and perseveringly did he pursue his labours, and so wisely did he plan for their perpetuity and increase, that the precious fruits of them remained and continued to diffuse themselves, down to the times of which we speak. In England, though great numbers of his followers were burned at the stake, others were raised up to take their places; and though his books were studiously sought out and destroyed, yet copies of them continued to be multiplied, and were read with the deepest interest. His Bible was concealed and studied by numbers in England, notwithstanding the threats of popish inquisitors, and was received by the famishing of that terrible period as the bread and the water of life. The writings of Wickliffe removed the darkness from the minds of John Huss and Jerome of Prague, and kindled up a light in Bohemia which all the floods of error were not able to quench. In a word, although it was not the privilege of such men as Wickliffe and Huss to see the tyranny of the Romish church overthrown, and the whole face of society changed under the influence of the gospel, yet it devolved on them to infuse the leaven which ultimately pervaded and moved the entire mass. The light which they kindled was never extinguished; we trust in God it never will be. It continued to burn and shine through more than a hundred years of prevailing darkness and ignorance, till at length it was merged in the brighter beams of the Protestant Reformation.

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* A life of this eminent servant of God has been lately published by the American Sunday-School Union.

There were circumstances connected with the papacy, occurring as far back as the age of Wickliffe, which tended eminently to prepare the way for the reformation of which we speak. One of these was the removal of the seat of the popedom from Rome to Avignon, where it remained about seventy years. In consequence of this removal, the revenue of the pontiffs was materially diminished, and their enemies in Italy became more bold and insolent. They invaded and laid waste the territories of the church and assailed the pontifical authority in their publications. A number of cities revolted from the pope. Rome itself became the fomenter of cabals and civil wars; and the laws and decrees sent thither from France were often treated with contempt. In this latter respect the example of Italy was followed by other countries of Europe. Numerous instances might be adduced to show, that people generally attributed far less power to the fulminations and decrees which issued from France, than to those which used to proceed from Rome. Seditions were excited in different places against the pontiffs, which they were but poorly able to put down and subdue.

Scarcely had what the Romanists call their "Babylonish captivity" terminated, and the throne of the pontiffs been restored to Italy, when another event occurred of most disastrous influence upon their pretensions and claims. I refer now to what has been called "the great schism of the West." During the next fifty years the church had two or three heads at once, and the rival popes assailed each other with excommunications, maledictions and all sorts of hostile measures. By this means the nerves of the pontifical power were cut, and could not afterwards be restored. Kings and princes who before had been, in some sense, the servants of the pontiffs, now became their judges and masters. Moreover, great numbers, despising and disregarding those who could thus quarrel and fight for empire, committed their salvation into the hands of God, acknowledging that religion might subsist and the church be safe without any visible earthly head.

The disrespect for the pontiffs, which had been thus excited, was rather increased than diminished by the proceedings of the councils of Constance and Basil. By their bold exercise of authority, in resisting, deposing and electing popes, these great councils impressed upon the nations of Europe that there was a jurisdiction in the church superior even to the power of the pope, which they had before been taught to regard as supreme.

The revival of learning throughout Europe was an event exceedingly favourable to the Reformation. This revival had commenced as early as the eleventh century, but for a long period its progress was slow and almost imperceptible. It was greatly accelerated, near the middle of the fifteenth century, in consequence of the capture of Constantinople by the Turks; an event which, however disastrous to the interests of learning in the East, was the occasion of imparting new life and vigour to these interests in the West. Great numbers of learned Greeks, with their books and arts, were compelled to take refuge in Italy, and in other parts of Europe, where they gathered pupils, opened schools, and promoted the study of the classical authors of antiquity. Under such an influence, the mind of Europe began speedily to be enlightened and liberalized. Mankind awoke from the lethargy in which they had been sunk for so many centuries, and assumed the power of thinking and acting for themselves; and no sooner was this power assumed, than it began to be exercised with extraordinary boldness. Men were not afraid now of entering an untrodden path, or of embracing a new opinion. The novelty of a doctrine seems to have been a recommendation of it, and, instead of being startled when the daring hand of Luther tore aside the veil which covered long established errors, the genius of the age applauded and aided the attempt.

It was a circumstance highly favourable to the reformers, that they were, in general, learned men, and appeared before the public as the advocates, not only of a pure religion, but of sound learning: whereas the ignorant monks not only opposed the spread of Luther's doctrines, but set themselves with equal fierceness against the introduction of learning into Germany. With them, it was a sufficient objection to the works of Erasmus, that they were written in so good Latin. It was in this way that the cause of learning and the cause of the Reformation came to be regarded, for a time, as almost identical. They had, in general, the same friends and the same enemies. This enabled the reformers to carry on the contest with great advantage. Erudition, industry, accuracy of sentiment, purity of composition, even wit and raillery were almost wholly on their side; and they triumphed easily over illiterate monks, whose rude arguments and ruder style were found insufficient for the defence of a system which all the learning and jesuitry of its later advocates have not been able to support, or so much as to palliate.

Another circumstance which greatly promoted the Reformation, was the then recent invention of the art of printing. By means of this art, the facility of acquiring and propagating knowledge was wonderfully increased, and the books of the reformers, which must otherwise have made their way slowly and with uncertainty into distant countries, spread at once all over Europe. Nor were they read only by the rich and the learned, who alone had access to books before printing was discovered. They were adapted to the capacities and came into the hands of the common people, who, upon this appeal to their individual judgment, were led to examine and to reject many doctrines which formerly they had been required to believe.

In consequence of the revival of learning, many *learned men* were raised up, some before and some contemporary with the reformers, who, without joining them or holding any formal connexion with them, still helped forward the work in which they were engaged. Such were Danté and Petrarch in the fourteenth century, the former of whom places several of the popes in the depths of hell, and represents the church as utterly corrupt and sunk under the weight of her pollutions.* In one of his sonnets, Petrarch assimilates the papal court to Babylon, and declares that he has quitted it forever, as a place equally deprived of virtue and of shame, the residence of misery and the mother of error. In another, he fairly exhausts, on this subject, every epithet of reproach and abhorrence of which his native language was capable. Of the same general character and influence were the writings of the celebrated Boccacio. It was the principal object of his Decameron (the most popular and entertaining of all his works) to expose the debaucheries of the religious orders, and to bring them into utter contempt. This work was translated into various languages, and circulated all over Europe.

Of like character with this were the *Facetiæ* of Poggio, upwards of ten editions of which were issued in the last thirty years of the fifteenth century. This work was published, not only in Italy, but at Antwerp and Leipsic; an evident proof of its great and almost universal celebrity.

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* Inferno, cant. xi. and xix.

As we draw nearer to the times of the Reformation, we find men of learning were multiplied in different parts of Europe, and God was employing them, in various ways, preparatory to the deliverance of his church. It devolved on Reuchlin, the most learned man of his age, to revive in Germany the study of the Scriptures in their original tongues.

At the very beginning of the sixteenth century, he revised the Vulgate, and gave to the world the first Hebrew and German Grammar and Dictionary that had ever been published. By this labour he took off the seals from the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and made it easy for Luther to open and translate these sacred books for the good of his countrymen. Reuchlin was the uncle, the patron and tutor of the celebrated Melancthon, by whom the latter was trained up to be a principal promoter, as well as ornament of the Reformation.

Ulric de Hutten, an orator and knight, was not improperly called the Demosthenes of Germany, on account of his philippics against the papacy. Among his various writings was one which he entitled *The Romish Trinity;* in which he strips bare the disorders of the papal court, and urges the necessity of putting a forcible stop to its oppressions. "There are three things," says he, in this tract, "which we commonly bring away with us from Rome; a bad conscience, a vitiated stomach and an empty purse. There are three things which Rome has no faith in; the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the dead and hell. There are three things which Rome chiefly trades in; the grace of Christ, the dignities of the church and women." Hutten, like Reuchlin, was sorely persecuted by the monks, and was obliged, in the latter part of his life, to take refuge in one of the castles of Germany.

But the most remarkable personage among the learned, who, while he cautiously stood aloof from the Reformation, was employed, in providence, to help it forward, was Erasmus of Rotterdam. Being destined for the priesthood, though he never entered it, and trained up in the knowledge of ecclesiastical literature, he applied himself more to theological inquiries than any of the revivers of learning in that age. Though engaged, after a time, in open controversy with the reformers, he was nevertheless useful to the Reformation in various ways. By his example and influence, he contributed to diffuse a love of learning and a spirit of liberal inquiry and discussion. He unveiled the errors and corruptions of the church, and assailed them with the most pungent satire. But more especially he laboured to recall the public mind from scholastic quibbles, and to direct it to the study of the Holy Scriptures. "I am firmly resolved," said he, "to die in the study of the Scriptures. In that is my joy and peace."

It was in the year 1616, that he published his New Testament in Greek; the first, and for a long time the only, critical edition extant. This he accompanied with a Latin translation, in which he boldly corrected the Vulgate and gave a reason for his corrections. It was in vain that the monks clamoured against this most important work, charging Erasmus with undertaking to correct the Holy Ghost. He knew the ground on which he stood, and was well able to refute their clamours, if not to silence them. Erasmus did for the New Testament what Reuchlin before had done for the Old. These men gave the Scriptures to *the learned* of Europe, but Luther gave them to the common people.

Among the arrangements of Providence calculated to favour the Reformation may be reckoned, also, the particular *forms of government* at that time established in the countries where it commenced. The German empire was a confederacy of different States, with the emperor as its head. Each of these States possessed the sovereignty over its own territories. The Imperial Diet or Congress was composed of the princes of the sovereign States, and exercised the legislative power for the whole of the Germanic body. The emperor ratified the laws, decrees, or resolutions of this assembly. It was his office, also, to publish and execute them. The emperor was chosen for life; and it devolved on seven of the more powerful princes, under the title of electors, to award the imperial crown. This particular form of constitution, which, by the ordering of Providence, the empire had received, was manifestly favourable to the promulgation of new doctrines. If Germany had been a monarchy, strictly so called, like France or England, the arbitrary will of the sovereign might have delayed, if not frustrated, the progress of the gospel. But, as we have seen, it was a confederacy. The truth, opposed in one State, might be received favourably in another. Important centres of light, which might gradually penetrate the darkness and enlighten the surrounding population, might quickly be formed in different districts of the empire.

The same remark may be made in respect to Switzerland,-where the Reformation commenced about at the same time as in Germany. It was so ordered in providence that Switzerland also should be a *confederacy*, and not a simple monarchy. Each of the cantons was an independent republic, all of which were confederated together, and governed by a general diet or congress.

The arrangements of Providence in regard to some of the *reigning powers* in Germany were also in the highest degree favourable to the Reformation. But for the death of the Emperor Maximilian, almost at the commencement of the

Reformation, it is hard to see how the life of Luther could have been preserved. This monarch was deeply interested, from considerations of policy as well as of principle, to conciliate the pontiff, and urged him, by letter, to take vigorous measures in opposition to Luther. "We will be careful," said he, "to enforce throughout our empire whatever your holiness shall decree on this subject." The life of the reformer was completely in the emperor's hands; he had the opportunity, the power and the disposition to destroy it; and without a miracle we see not how it could have been preserved. But before any measures could be matured, the emperor himself was removed by death.

The raising up of such a man as Frederic the Wise, the renowned Elector of Saxony, to be the sovereign and protector of Luther, is another interposition of Providence that must not be overlooked. During the period intervening between the death of Maximilian and the elevation of Charles V. to the throne of the empire, Frederic was sole monarch in his own dominions. And after the election of Charles, he was under so great obligations to Frederic for the influence which he had exerted in his favour, that he was very unwilling to displease him.* Yet "Frederic," to use the language of another, "was precisely the prince that was needed for the cradle of the Reformation. Too much weakness on the part of those friendly to the work might have allowed it to be crushed. Too much haste would have caused a premature explosion of the storm that was gathering against it." Frederic was cautious and moderate, but firm. He possessed in large measure that grace which, of all others, is most necessary in difficult times—*he waited upon God.* He put in practice the wise counsel of Gamaliel, "If this work be of man, it will come to naught; but if it be of God, we cannot overthrow it." "Things," said he, "are come to such a pass, that men can do no more. God alone can effect any thing. We must, therefore, leave to his power those great events which are too hard for us." We may well admire the wisdom of Providence in the choice of such a prince, to guard the beginnings of the Reformation.

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* Frederic had the offer of the imperial crown, but he declined it, and recommended to his brother electors to unite with him in the elevation of Charles.

Another thing to be admired, and which we shall have frequent occasion to notice as we proceed with this history, is the manner in which divine Providence kept the thoughts and the hands of the Emperor Charles occupied, so that he had no time or opportunity to exert his power in crushing the infant Reformation. Governing, as he did, not only Germany, but Spain, Sicily, Naples, the Netherlands, and Austria, with the Turks on one side of him, and his great rival, Francis I., on another, and the aspiring, intriguing court of Rome on another, he was so continually and intensely busied with wars, reprisals, negotiations, and other affairs of state, that he could give little attention to what he considered as a mere ecclesiastical, theological controversy; and thus the Reformation was permitted to take root, and spring up, and extend itself on every side, till it was able to put him at defiance. When, at length, he set himself to overthrow it, it could not be subverted or overthrown.

In view of the remarks which have been made, we see the providence of God exerting itself in various ways preparatory to the reformation of his church. But that which tended more than every thing else to prepare for the coming Reformation, was the *internal corruptions of the church itself.* The language of Jeremiah was truly applicable to the Romish church at this period: "Her own wickedness corrected her, and her backslidings reproved her." Having long persisted in despising the reproofs and slighting the solemn warnings of Heaven, she was permitted to run down from one degree of corruption to another, till the earth itself could no longer endure her, and was prepared to welcome any thing that promised a reformation. Who can contemplate without horror the character of the popes, at the commencement of the sixteenth century? Rodrigo Borgia—after having lived in illicit intercourse, first with a Roman lady, and afterwards with her daughter, by whom he had several children—obtained the pontificate by bribery, in 1492. He took the name of Alexander VI., and has been called, not improperly, the Nero of the pontiffs. The very day of his coronation he created his son, Cæsar Borgia, a ferocious and dissolute youth, Archbishop of Valencia, and Bishop of Pampeluna. He next proceeded to celebrate the nuptials of his daughter Lucretia, by festivities of the most indecent character. During the remainder of his life, and that of his diabolical son, the city of Rome, and even the Vatican, were filled with debauchery, rapine and wickedness. Nightly assassinations were of continual occurrence. Poison often destroyed those whom the dagger could not reach. Every one feared to move or breathe, lest he should be the next victim. Cæsar Borgia was the hero of crime. The spot on earth where all iniquity met and overflowed was the pontiff's seat. When man gives himself over to the power of evil, the higher his pretensions before God, the lower he sinks in the depths of hell. The dissolute entertainments given by the pope, and his son Cæsar, and his daughter Lucretia, are such as can neither be described nor thought of. The most impure groves of ancient worship were nothing to them. In order to rid himself of a wealthy cardinal, that he might seize his possessions, the pope had prepared poison in a box of sweetmeats, which was to be placed on the table, after a sumptuous feast. The cardinal, receiving a hint of the design, removed the poisoned box and placed it before Alexander. He ate of it and perished. His body, all swelled, black and shockingly disfigured, was carried to St. Peter's, to be there interred, the people crowding about it with joy, and congratulating one another that they were at length delivered from the terror of such a viper.

The same year (1503) in which Pope Alexander died, Julius II. was advanced to the pontifical throne. His character differed from that of his predecessor,* but was scarcely less detestable, on the whole. He has not unfrequently been denominated " the mad warrior." He made it his whole object, from the time of his promotion to the hour of his death, to extend the temporal dominions of the church by force of arms and the blood of Christians; thus acting, to use an expression of Mezeray, more like a sultan of the Turks, than as the vicar of the Prince of peace and the pretended father of all believers. Two hundred thousand persons are said to have perished in the wars, carried on at the instigation of this furious and blood-thirsty pope; and as many more would probably have undergone the same fate, had not death intervened, and prevented his disturbing the repose of Europe any longer. By all the contemporary writers Julius is charged, not only with mad ambition, but with immoderate drinking, which is supposed to have hastened his end. He would not abstain from wine, even when burning under the severity of a fever.

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* Alexander was not the *immediate* predecessor of Julius. The pontificate of Pius III. intervened; but this lasted only twenty-six days.

When such examples were exhibited in the pontifical palace, and by those who were acknowledged as heads of the church, the character of the clergy may be easily conjectured. With some honourable exceptions, it was disgraceful in the extreme. In the first place, the great body of the clergy were deplorably ignorant. Why should they not be? What need had they of sacred learning? It was no longer their office to explain the Scriptures, but to perform rites and grant letters of indulgence; and for the fulfilling of such a ministry no great attainments in learning were necessary. The monks affirmed that all heresy arose from the study of the Greek and Hebrew languages, especially the former. "The New Testament," said one of them, "is full of serpents and thorns. Greek is a modern language but recently invented, and against it we must be on our guard. As to Hebrew, it is certain that whoever studies *that* immediately becomes a Jew." Even the school of theology in Paris did not scruple to declare before parliament, "There is an end of religion, if the study of Hebrew and Greek is permitted." And what of learning there was among the clergy, was not, in general, sacred learning. The Ciceronians, as they were called in Italy, affected a great contempt for the Bible, on account of its style; and undertook to change its style into that of Virgil and Horace. Thus Cardinal Bembo used to call the Father *Jupiter*, and the Holy Spirit *the celestial zephyr*. Remission of sins was *the pity of the Manes;* and Christ the Son of God was *Minerva sprung from the brows of Jupiter.*

But the clergy generally were chargeable with something worse than ignorance. They were rapacious, warlike, corrupt, debauched.

Dignitaries of the church, following the example of the popes, preferred the tumult of camps to the service of the altar. To be able, lance in hand, to compel his neighbours to do him homage, was one of the most conspicuous qualifications for a bishop. Baldwin, Archbishop of Treves, was constantly at war with his neighbours, rasing their castles, erecting fortresses of his own, and thinking only how to enlarge his territories. Everywhere the bishops were in frequent war with the towns, the citizens demanding and struggling for freedom, and their spiritual masters requiring implicit obedience.

The wealth of the clergy was, at this period, enormous, and their immunities great. In Germany it was computed that the ecclesiastics had got into their hands more than half of the national property. In other countries the proportion varied ; but the share belonging to the church was everywhere prodigious. These vast possessions were not subject to the burdens imposed upon the lands of the laity. The German clergy were exempted by law from all taxes ; and if, on any occasion, the bishops were pleased to grant some aid towards supply-ing the public exigencies, this was considered as a free gift, flowing from their own generosity, which the civil magistrate had no right to exact. In consequence of this strange state of things, the laity in Germany had the mortification to find themselves loaded with excessive burdens, while such as possessed the greatest share of the property were free from all obligation to support or defend the state.

What added to this mortification was, that the higher German ecclesiastics were, in most instances, foreigners. They were not native subjects, who might be expected to sympathize with the princes and people, but lazy, voluptuous Italians, who frequently could not speak the language of the country ; the mere creatures of the pope, whom, in consequence of his usurped right of conferring benefices, he had forced upon the people against their will. The practice of selling benefices was, at this period, so notorious, that no pains were taken to conceal or disguise it. Companies of merchants, in some instances, openly purchased the benefices of different districts from the pope's ministers, and retailed them at an advanced price. Transactions so grossly simoniacal, and so unworthy the ministers of a Christian church, were witnessed with deep regret by some, and with unavailing murmurs and complaints by others.

But the worst of the case has not yet been exhibited. The clergy of this period were not only rapacious and warlike; their morals were, to the last degree, corrupt. Priests openly consorted with abandoned characters; frequented taverns and houses of ill-fame; picked locks and broke open doors; played cards and dice; and finished their nightly orgies with quarrels and blasphemy. The severe and unnatural law of celibacy, which was enforced upon all the clergy, high and low, gave occasion to such irregularities, that in many places the concubinage of priests was not only permitted, but preferred and enjoined. The people *chose* that their priest should have a woman in keeping, that so the females of their own families might be the more secure. In some parts of Germany, the priest paid to the bishop a regular tax for the woman with whom he lived, and for every child that was born in his house. Erasmus tells us of a certain bishop who received this tax from no less than eleven thousand priests, in a single year.

And of whatever crimes the clergy might be guilty, they were in no fear or danger of punishment. The *civil* authorities had no jurisdiction over them ; and from the ecclesiastical authorities immunity could always be secured for money. The officers of the Roman chancery actually published a book, specifying the precise sums to be demanded of ecclesiastics for the absolution of crime. For instance, a deacon, guilty of murder, was absolved for twenty crowns. A bishop or abbot might assassinate for three hundred livres. A priest might violate his vows of chastity, even under the most aggravating circumstances, for one hundred livres. In this shameful book, such crimes as seldom occur in human life, and as exist, perhaps, only in the impure imagination of a casuist, were taxed at a very moderate rate.

Nor were criminal ecclesiastics the only persons over whom the shield of the church was extended, to secure them from punishment. Its temples, like those of the heathen, were regarded as a refuge, to which malefactors of all classes might flee and be safe. Assassins, fratricides, poisoners, deserters, incendiaries, robbers, criminals of every class, rushed together to the sanctuaries, where they were all well received, and lived in a state of entire security. They ate, drank, worked at their trades, and kept open shop in the churches. They wore concealed arms under their garments, arrested travellers that they might extort money for their ransom, and fired at the police officers when they chanced to pass by. They sallied out frequently to commit fresh robberies and assassinations, and returned within the sanctuary of the church, that they might enjoy without fear that protection which the temple and its ministers afforded them. The priests and monks were in favour of this system, because it supplied them with servants at a cheap rate; whilst from wealthy criminals large sums of money were received as the price of their protection.

I might proceed to much greater lengths in describing the corruptions of the church at the period of the Reformation, but I forbear. Enough, surely, has been said to show, that the world might well be weary of existing abominations, and might be expected to look with anxious eyes, in all directions, for deliverance. And such was, in fact, the case. Such had been the case for a long period. No subject was more freely talked of, among princes and people, than the *need* of a reformation—a reformation in the church that should be thorough and universal—a reformation in both its *head* and its *members*.

It was under the influence of this feeling, that various plans had been devised, and various expedients resorted to, with a view to the reformation of the church; but all in vain. Kings and princes had repeatedly attempted a reformation. This did Henry II. of England, as early as the twelfth century; but the result was, instead of sundering the heavy chains of ecclesiastical imposition, they were riveted down upon him with a tenfold power. The brave and warlike Henry IV. of Germany undertook also to correct abuses, and restrain the monstrous usurpations of the church. But after a long and fruitless struggle, he was compelled to pass three days and nights in the trenches of an Italian fortress, exposed to the winter's cold, barefoot, in a scanty woollen garment, imploring, with tears and cries, the pity of his holiness, before papal inflexibility began to relax, and the humble supplicant was pardoned. The kings of France, in repeated instances, exerted all their power with a view to the reformation of the church, but with no better success.

The same object was next attempted by the literati of the age. Danté and Petrarch, with other poets and satirists of Italy, undertook to laugh, to shame the church out of its corruptions. But although the way was thus prepared for reformation, it was soon found that neither literature nor ridicule would effect the object. The great leviathan could not thus be tamed.

Attempts were repeatedly made to reform the church by means of councils. This was the avowed and leading object of the great council of Constance. The church was corrupt, and must be reformed ; and a body, made up of long lists of cardinals, archbishops and bishops, with eighteen hundred doctors of divinity and priests, besides a vast number of inferior ecclesiastics, was drawn together to reform it. But instead of reforming the church, they deformed it the more. They added to all its other crimes the burning of John Huss and Jerome of Prague, and separated, leaving a confessedly polluted church as far from reformation as ever.

By efforts at reformation such as these, the wisdom of man seems to have exhausted itself; and nought now was left to be relied on but the *power of God.* And the day in which God was to display his power and glorify his name, in the deliverance of his afflicted people, at length arrived. By a series of providential occurrences, as we have seen, he had long been preparing the way, and ripening the world (so to speak) for this desired event, and in the mode and at the moment of his own appointment it was ushered in. The outward means were, at the first, feeble and unpromising, but the success was sure. The instruments employed were weak in themselves, and were fully sensible of their own weakness; but on this account it is the more gloriously manifest, to all who examine the history of those times, that the excellency of the power was indeed of God and not of men.

CHAPTER II.

Reformation in Germany—Parents of Luther—His birth and early education—At school at Magdeburg and at Eisenach—His extreme poverty and distress—Sent to the university at Erfurth—Academical honours—Luther awakened and distressed—Enters a convent—Menial employments—Studies in the convent—Great mental anguish—Is converted through the instrumentality of Staupitz—Ordained priest—Appointed to a professorship at Wittemberg.

In our last chapter we noticed some of those providential occurrences which preceded the Reformation from popery, and prepared the way for its introduction and triumph. The precise month or year when the Reformation may be said to have commenced it might not be easy to determine. The progress of light and truth in the minds of those who were chiefly engaged in promoting it was gradual; and the incipient steps were taken by them when they can hardly be said to have known what they did, or what was likely to be the result of their labours. They were led along by an unseen hand, and in a way which they knew not; and were often as much surprised, in view of the ground over which they had passed, and the mighty effects which had been produced, as were the most indifferent of those who witnessed their actions. Thus much, however, may be said, that the Reformation commenced in two different countries, Germany and Switzerland, and under the direction of two different individuals, Martin Luther and Ulric Zwingle, at about the same period. As Germany was the field in which it spread most rapidly and triumphed most gloriously, and from which it was diffused through many kingdoms, we shall commence with a history of the Reformation in Germany; reserving the account of its progress in Switzerland, and the other countries of Protestant Europe, to a later period in our inquiry.

In describing the Reformation in Germany we naturally commence with a history of the early life, education, character and labours of MARTIN LUTHER. The parents of this remarkable man were John Luther and Margaret Lindemann, peasants of Eisenach, in the county of Mansfield, in Thuringia. Soon after their marriage John and Margaret left Eisenach, and settled in the little town of Eisleben, in Saxony. The father of the reformer was an upright man, diligent in his business, openhearted, and possessing a strength of purpose bordering upon obstinacy. Though living at a period when books were scarce and costly, he made shift to procure some of them; and these he read with much earnestness and diligence. The study of them constituted his recreation in those intervals of rest which his severe and assiduous labours allowed to him. His wife seems to have possessed all those virtues which adorn good and pious women. Modesty, the fear of God and a deeply devotional spirit especially marked her character. She was considered by the neighbours among whom she dwelt as a model worthy of their imitation.

The son of whom we speak was born on the evening of November 10th, 1483. It was St. Martin's day, and, in honour of the saint on whose day he was born, the babe received the name of Martin. Little Martin was not more than six months old when his parents removed from Eisleben, and settled in the town of Mansfield, the mines of which were then much celebrated.

The early years of their abode at Mansfield were full of difficulty for the worthy John and his wife. They lived, at first, in extreme poverty. "My parents," said Luther, "were very poor. My father was a woodcutter, and my mother has often carried the wood on her back, that she might earn wherewith to bring up her children." Under the training of such parents, young Luther was early accustomed to toil and hard fare. But the circumstances of John, after a time, improved. By his frugality and industry he was enabled to establish two small furnaces for iron; and on account of his excellent character and strong good sense he was promoted to be one of the town-council of Mansfield.

Young Martin was early instructed in the religion of the times, and when but a mere child was placed at school. He tells us that his father often carried him in his arms to the house of his teacher, and came again to fetch him. The use of the rod was more fashionable in those days than it is at present, and the determined, resolute character of the child exposed him continually to the infliction of it. His parents often punished him severely; and at school his master flogged him fifteen times in one day. Referring to this fact, Luther says, "It is right to punish children, but at the same time we must *love* them. My parents *thought* they were doing right, but they had not that discernment of character that was necessary that they might know when, on whom, and how punishment should be inflicted."

Martin learned something at school. He was taught the catechism, the ten commandments, the apostles' creed, the Lord's prayer, some hymns and some forms of prayer, a Latin grammar composed by Donatus in the fourth century; in short, all that was studied in the school at Mansfield. But he seems to have been under the influence of no religious feeling except that of fear. He knew Christ only as an angry judge, and was ready to turn pale with fear whenever the name of Christ was spoken.

The light of science, which was beginning everywhere to diffuse itself, reached even the cottage of the miner of Mansfield. He conceived the highest hopes respecting his son, and resolved that he should be a scholar.

Therefore, when Martin was fourteen years of age, he was separated from the paternal roof and sent to the school of the Franciscans at Magdeburg. This was a severe apprenticeship to Luther. In a strange city, without friends or protectors, he trembled in the presence of his severe instructers, and in the intervals of study was obliged to beg his bread. His custom was, with several of his companions, to go singing through the streets, and, stopping in front of the peasants' houses, to receive whatever they were pleased to bestow.

After about a year Martin was removed from Magdeburg, and sent to a celebrated school in Eisenach. His parents had some relatives there, from whom they hoped that their son might receive assistance. But his circumstances were not at all improved by the change. His relatives did not trouble themselves about him; or perhaps they were poor, and could not assist him. He was obliged here, as at Magdeburg, to sing with his school-fellows through the streets, and beg his bread. Instead of bread, however, he often received nothing but harsh words. Often was he overwhelmed with sorrow, and shed many tears. It is in-

Engr. by M. Schmitz. T Sinclair Lith. Pha.

LUTHER BEGGING at EISENACH.

teresting to contemplate these facts in the early life of the reformer, and see by what severity of discipline God was preparing him for his future career of usefulness.

On one occasion, having been repulsed from three houses, and being about to return fasting to his lodgings, he stopped before the door of an honest burgher, and gave himself up to the most painful reflections. "Must I, for want of bread, abandon my favourite studies, return to my father's house, and immure myself in the mines of Mansfield?" As he stood here motionless, thinking and weeping, the door of the house opened, and the mistress of it invited him to enter. She had often seen young Martin in the church, and had been affected with the sweetness of his singing and his apparent devotion. She had seen him repulsed from the doors of her neighbours, and witnessed the severity with which he had been treated. He now stood, apparently overwhelmed with sorrow, before her door, and she could keep it shut no longer. She invited him to enter, soothed him with kind words and supplied his immediate wants. She did more than this. With the approbation of her husband, she in a few days invited him to live in her house, and promised to be his patron and protector. Thus the God who hears the hungry ravens, looked down in pity upon this starving child, and raised him up a benefactor, when he least expected it. The name of the burgher who thus befriended Luther was Conrad Cotta, and that of his wife, Ursula. In after life Luther used to speak of her as "the Christian Shunamite;" and it was with reference to her that he uttered the memorable saying, "There is nothing sweeter than the heart of a pious woman."

Young Luther spent two or three years in the family of Cotta; and they were among the happiest years of his life. He made rapid progress in his studies, and in addition to his other pursuits, was able to give some attention to the science of music. He learned to play on the flute and lute, and often he cheered his pensive hours by accompanying his fine alto voice with the latter instrument. He also took pleasure in this exercise, because it was so agreeable to his kind patrons, who, like most Germans, were fond of music. Many years after, when Luther had become a renowned professor at Wittemberg, he received one of

Cotta's sons under his roof, and thus repaid, in part, to the child, what he had received from the father and mother.

Luther continued at Eisenach until he had reached his eighteenth year. It was here that he became acquainted with the dead languages, and studied rhetoric and poesy. Cheerful, obliging and highly social in his disposition, he was much beloved by his instructers; and a special favourite with his fellow students. But having tasted the sweets of learning, he sighed for something more than could be gained at Eisenach. He longed for a university education; and his father, who was full of confidence in the talents of his son, was equally desirous that he should be gratified. It was his father's intention that he should study the law; in the practice of which he hoped to see him filling honourable stations, gaining the favour of nobles and princes, and shining on the great theatre of the world. It was soon determined that Martin should be sent to the university at Erfurth, where he arrived in the year 1501.

The studies then held in the highest estimation at Erfurth were the scholastic philosophy and logic; and agreeably to the wishes of his instructers, the new pupil grappled at once with the subtilties of Occam, Duns Scotus, Bonaventura, and Thomas Aquinas. But he could not be satisfied with pursuits of this nature. His mind, eager for instruction, required better food; and he applied himself to the study of Cicero, Virgil, and the best Latin classics. But even at this period he was not intent alone on the cultivation of his understanding. There was within him a serious thoughtfulness, a heart looking upwards, which God gives to those whom he designs to make his most zealous servants. He fervently invoked the divine blessing on his labours. He prayed every morning; then went to church; afterwards commenced his studies; and was careful not to lose a moment during the day. It had become a proverb with him, when not more than eighteen years old: "*Bene precasse est bene studuisse; To pray well is the better half of study.*"

Young Luther spent much time in the *library* of the university, hoarding up the treasures which were there collected. When he had been two years at Erfurth, and was now twenty years of age, as he was one day in the library, turning over books and reading the title-pages of different authors, he accidentally fell upon a Latin Bible. It was a rare book; at that time almost unknown. He had never seen one before in his life. He was astonished at finding more in the Bible than those fragments of the gospels and epistles which the church had selected to be read to the people. Till then, he had supposed that these were the whole word of God. But here were so many pages, so many chapters, so many books, of which he had no idea! His heart beat high, as he held in his hand the whole inspired volume. With feelings indescribable, he turned over the pages of God's holy word. "O," thought he, "if God would but give me such a book for my own!" He read and re-read it, and went back to the library to read it again. For the first time, perhaps, for a century, this precious volume had now been removed from its shelf; a volume which Luther was soon to give to his countrymen in their own language; which was to become the book of life to the benighted nations.

The same year in which Luther found the Bible, he took his first academical degree.

The excessive labour which he had undergone in preparing for it, occasioned a dangerous illness. Death stared him in the face. It seemed as though his end had come. Among those who visited him during his sickness was a venerable priest, who knew something of his character and was deeply interested in his case. "Soon," said the sick student, in sorrowful accents, "soon I shall be summoned hence." But the prophetic old man kindly answered, "My dear young friend, take courage! You will not die this time. Our God will raise you up, and make you his instrument in comforting many others. God lays his cross upon those whom he loves, and they who bear it patiently gain much wisdom." The words of this venerable father made a deep impression upon the sick youth. They revived his spirits, and infused sweet consolation into his heart. They were not forgotten after his recovery; though as yet the course of his studies and the purpose of his life remained the same.

In the year 1505, Luther became master of arts and doctor in philosophy. The occasion was one of high honour to him. There was a splendid procession and a general rejoicing.

Encouraged by these honours, Luther prepared to apply himself wholly to the study of law, agreeably to the wishes of his father. But God willed otherwise; and this will he now began very significantly to manifest. He manifested it in the *conscience* of the young man himself. His conscience incessantly reminded him that religion was the one thing needful, and that his first care should be for the salvation of his soul. He knew God's hatred of sin, and the terrible penalty which He denounces against the sinner; and when he asked himself, tremblingly, whether he was sure that he possessed the favour of God, his conscience promptly answered, No. This led him to resolve anew, that he would do all that depended on himself, to secure a well grounded hope of heaven.

The *providences* of God concurred also with the strivings of his Spirit, to deepen conviction and strengthen good resolutions in the mind of Luther. It was about this time that one of his most intimate college friends was basely murdered. As he looked upon the mangled body of his friend, the question arose in his mind with great power, "What had become of *me*, if I had thus suddenly been called away?" The more he revolved this question, the more it affected him, and filled him with the deeper anguish.

Shortly after, as he was returning from a visit to his father, and had arrived within a few miles of Erfurth, he was overtaken by a violent storm. The winds roared; the lightnings flashed; and a thunderbolt struck the ground close by his side. Luther fell on his knees, thinking that his hour had come. Death, judgment, and eternity were all before him, and in the midst of his terror and anguish he made a *vow*, that if God would appear for his deliverance, he would forsake the world and devote himself entirely to his service. God did appear for his deliverance; and Luther, in his present ignorance, knew no way in which his vow could be performed, and that holiness which he sought could be acquired, but by entering a cloister. He must literally forsake the world, and bury himself in the seclusion of some one of the monastic orders. Such were the means employed by an inscrutable Providence to change the whole destiny of Luther. He was smitten to the earth, much as Paul was; and rose with a fixed determination to enter upon a new course of life.

The manner in which Luther executed his resolution was very peculiar, but strongly characteristic of himself. After his return to the university, he one evening invited his college friends to a simple but cheerful repast. The scene was enlivened with pleasant music. It was one of hilarity and joy. But when the gayety of his companions was at its height, Luther seized the moment to disclose to them the state of his mind, and acquaint them with the resolution which he had adopted. It was in vain that they attempted to expostulate and oppose. His purpose was fixed; and that very night it was carried into complete execution. He abandoned his lodgings in the university, leaving behind him all his furniture and books, except Plautus and Virgil, (for as yet he had no Bible,) and repaired alone to the convent of the hermits of St. Augustine. He knocked for admittance. The door opened, and closed upon him, and Luther was separated from the world. The next day he sent letters to his friends, together with the clothes which till then he had worn, and the ring which he had received when made master of arts, that nothing might be left to remind him of the world he had abandoned.

When the acquaintances of Luther received his letters, they were filled with astonishment. They repaired, in great numbers, to the convent, in hopes of inducing him to retract his resolution; but in vain. The doors were closed against them; and a whole month elapsed before any one was permitted to speak with the new monk, or even to see him. But the disappointment of his father at what had taken place was greater than that of all others. He had exerted himself to the utmost to support his son at the university, hoping to see him a barrister, a statesman, allied in marriage with the rich and the noble, and filling a large space in the eyes of the world; and now, in one fatal night, all his ambitious projects are overthrown. He wrote an angry letter to his son, in which he threatened him, if he persisted, with the entire loss of his favour, and with being utterly disinherited from a father's love. After a time, however, the feelings of the father softened, and he reluctantly submitted to that which he had no power to avert.

The monks were, of course, exceedingly rejoiced at the acquisition they had gained. Full of admiration, they gathered around the young novitiate, commending his decision and renunciation of the world. Nevertheless, they soon began to treat him harshly, and to impose upon him the most menial services. He must open and shut the gates, wind up the clock, sweep the church, and clean the rooms. And when this work was done, he must take his bread-bag, and go through the streets of Erfurth, begging from door to door, and perhaps at the doors of those very persons who before had been his acquaintances and inferiors. But Luther bore it all with patience. Inclined, from his natural disposition to devote himself heartily to whatever he undertook, it was with his *whole soul* that he had become a monk. Besides, he no longer wished to spare his body, or to regard the satisfying of his flesh. It was by self-mortification that he expected to acquire that humility and holiness, in pursuit of which he had become an inmate of the cloister.

The poor monk eagerly availed himself of every moment he could snatch from his degrading employments to engage in his beloved studies. But his brethren were dissatisfied with this, and forced him, by their murmurs, to lay his books aside. "Come, come," said they, "it is not *by study* that you can benefit the cloister, but by begging bread, corn, eggs, fish, meat and money." And so Luther was obliged to put away his books and resume his bag. Perhaps it was necessary that he should submit to these miserable impositions, in order that he might feel the full weight of them. To empty the cup, he must drink it to the dregs.

The severity of this discipline did not last, however, so long as might have been apprehended. Upon the intercession of the university of which Luther had been a member, the prior of the convent released him from those menial offices which his brethren had imposed upon him, and permitted him to engage in his favourite studies. It was now that he began to read the works of Augustine and the other fathers of the church. He found also in the cloister a Bible fastened with a chain; and to this chained Bible he had recourse daily. He understood but little of the divine word; but still it was his most absorbing study. Sometimes he would meditate all day on a single passage; and then he would occupy himself in committing to memory select portions of Scripture. It was at this period that he began to study the sacred books in their original tongues, and thus lay a foundation for the most perfect and useful of all his works, the translation of the Bible. He made use of Reuchlin's Hebrew Lexicon, which had just been published; also of the comments of Nicholas Lyra. It was this latter circumstance which gave rise to the remark, "*Si Lyra non lyrasset, Lutherus non saltasset.* If Lyra had not played his lyre, Luther had not danced."

But it was not for purposes of study that Luther had abandoned the university, and immured himself in the recesses of a cloister. It was that he might crucify the flesh, secure the remission of sins and become holy. He was very punctual, therefore, in the observance of all the prescribed penances and rules. He spared neither fastings, macerations, nor vigils. On one occasion, he passed seven whole weeks almost without sleep. A little bread and a single herring were often his only food.

He was continually struggling against the evil thoughts and inclinations of his heart, and was willing to endure any suffering, or make any sacrifice, for the sake of becoming holy and gaining heaven. In a letter written long afterwards to Duke George of Saxony, he says, "I was so devout a monk, and followed the rules of my order so strictly, that I cannot tell you all. If ever a monk entered heaven by his monkish merits, certainly I should have gained admittance there. All the monks who knew me will confirm this; and if I had persevered much longer, I should have become literally a martyr, through watchings, prayer, reading and other labours."

But the distressing anxieties which had pressed upon the heart of Luther while in the world, pursued him to his cell. He found no peace to his conscience, or rest to his soul. Through the teachings of the divine word and Spirit, he had formed some conception of what it is to be holy; and he was distressed at finding neither in his heart nor his life, any appearance of that holiness which he saw to be needful. A dreadful discovery this, to every enlightened, convicted sinner! No righteousness within; none without. Everywhere, omission of duty; everywhere, pollution and guilt. The more ardent Luther's natural character, the more powerful was his secret and constant resistance to that which was good, and the deeper did he find himself plunged in misery and despair. Those around him encouraged him to perform *good works*, and in that way to satisfy the divine justice. "But what works," said he, "can proceed out of a heart like mine! How can I, with works polluted even in their source and motive, stand before a holy judge!"

Luther, at this period, was greatly agitated and distressed. He moved, like a spectre, through the long corridors of his cloister, with sighs and groans. He found to his sorrow that, although by entering the convent he had obtained a change of garment, he had experienced no change of heart. He performed penances, repeated prayers and confessed daily; but all was of no use. The burden was still upon his spirit, and nought that he had power to do could remove it. Under the anguish of his mind, his bodily powers failed;

his strength forsook him ; and he was rapidly drawing to the gates of death.

Not knowing what else to make of him, the monks thought him possessed with the devil. At one time, having been shut up in his cell for several days and nights, he was found stretched on the floor in a state of entire unconsciousness and without any signs of life. And it is remarkable that he could be aroused from this state only by the sweet sounds of music. The fine voices of some choral singers operated like a charm upon the poor dying monk, and by degrees his strength and consciousness returned. But he awakened only to a renewed sense of his misery. He needed some more powerful remedy to reach the malady of his heart.

But the day of his deliverance now approached. The vicar-general of the Augustines for all Germany was John Staupitz ; and the period of his visit to the convent at Erfurth had arrived. Staupitz had formerly passed through troubles very similar to those of Luther, and had found joy and peace in Christ. He was well qualified, therefore, to deal with the distressed young monk, whom he found on his visit to Erfurth. He was informed respecting him by the other members of the convent; sought him out; won his confidence by condescension and kindness; and dealt with him in the most prudent and faithful manner. When Luther told him how vain it was for him to make resolutions and promises, Staupitz advised him to make no more. "If God, for *Christ's sake*, will not be merciful to us, all our vows and good works will be of no avail." When Luther set before him the terrible apprehensions which he cherished as to the holiness and justice of God, exclaiming, "Who can endure the day of his coming? And who can stand when he appeareth?" Staupitz replied: "Why do you distress yourself with these speculations and high thoughts? Look to the wounds of Jesus Christ—to the blood which he has shed for you. It is there you will see the mercy of God. Instead of torturing yourself for your faults, cast yourself into the arms of the Redeemer. Trust in him,—in the righteousness of his life—in the expiatory sacrifice of his death. Do not shrink away from him. God is not against you; it is you who are estranged and averse from God."

In answer to the objection of Luther, that he did not find in himself that *repentance* which he thought necessary to salvation, Staupitz replied by explaining the nature of repentance. "It does not consist in austerities and penances, but *begins in the love of God.* That which some fancy to be the end of repentance is only the beginning of it. If you wish to become penitent and converted, do not follow these self-mortifications and inflictions; but *love him who has first loved you.*"

These were strange words to the ears of Luther. He listens, and listens again. He flies to the Scriptures and consults all the passages which speak of repentance and conversion. "It is even so, as my friend has said. Repentance must begin in the love of God." A new light now enters the mind of the pained sinner, and new consolations spring up in his soul. "It is Jesus Christ—yes, it is Jesus Christ himself that comforts me by these sweet and salutary words. Before, there was no word in the Bible more bitter to me than *repentance;* but now there is not one more sweet and pleasant. All those passages of Scripture which once alarmed me seem now to flow together from all sides, to spring up, and smile and play around my heart. O how blessed are all God's precepts, when we read them, not in books alone, but in the precious wounds of the Saviour?"

But these consolations of Luther were not without seasons of interruption. Sin was again felt in his tender conscience, and then he relapsed into his former despair. "O my sin! my sin! my sin!" he one day cried out in the presence of Staupitz, and in a tone of the bitterest grief. "Well," replied the latter, "would you be only the *semblance* of a sinner, and have only the *semblance* of a Saviour? Know that Jesus Christ is the Saviour of those who are *real* and *great* sinners, and deserving of utter condemnation."

Luther had trouble at this time not only with the state of his heart, but with some of the higher doctrines of the gospel. He wished to penetrate into the secret counsels of God—to unveil his mysteries and comprehend the incomprehensible. But his friend Staupitz checked him. He persuaded him not to attempt to fathom God, but to confine himself to what he has revealed of his character in Christ.

"Look at the wounds of Christ, and you will there see clearly the purpose of God towards man. We cannot understand God out of Christ."

Staupitz also endeavoured to impress upon Luther that God had some wise and good design in permitting him to be exercised with so many trials. "It is not for nothing that God proves you in this way. You will yet see there are great things in which he will make use of you as his minister." These words inspired the desponding monk with courage, and led him to regard his protracted sufferings in a new and interesting light.

Before leaving the convent the vicar-general also gave Luther a Bible, and directed him to the diligent and persevering study of it. Better advice than this certainly was never given; nor was any advice ever more faithfully followed. Except the works of St. Augustine, the Scriptures now constituted the only study of Luther; and his mind was in a state to receive and love the truth. It was to him as cold water to the fainting soul. The soil of his heart had been thoroughly ploughed, and in it the incorruptible seed took deep root.

When Staupitz left Erfurth, a new and glorious light had risen on the mind of Luther.

Shortly after this, Luther was ordained priest; on which occasion his father became reconciled to him, and made him a present of twenty florins. Immediately upon his consecration he began to preach in the parishes and convents in the vicinity of Erfurth.

But the time now drew near in which he was to be transferred to a wider sphere of usefulness than any which he had ever thought of. On the recommendation of his friend Staupitz, Frederic, the Elector of Saxony, near the close of the year 1508, appointed him to a professorship in his recently established university at Wittemberg. Luther thought it his duty to accept this appointment, and removed hastily from the cloister at Erfurth, after he had remained there about three years.

CHAPTER III.

Luther's labours and studies at Wittemberg—Popularity as a lecturer and preacher—Goes on an embassy to Rome—Shocked with what he saw there—Becomes a doctor of divinity and teacher of the Bible—Attacks the schoolmen and the prevailing superstitions—Visits the Augustine convents—Exposed to the plague—Oppressed with labour—His theses on depravity, free-will and grace—History of indulgences—Tetzel's manner of selling them—His preaching on the subject—Tetzel outwitted—Minds of people divided and distressed.

We have pursued the history of Luther till his arrival at Wittemberg, to enter on the duties of his professorship. He took up his abode in the convent of the Augustines; for, though a professor, he ceased not to be a monk. It devolved on him to teach physics and dialectics; and, of course, to engage renewedly in the study of these branches. In his present state of mind this was to him a hard necessity; yet he submitted to it. Writing to a friend at this time, he says, "I am very well, by God's favour, but that I am compelled to give my whole attention to philosophy. I long to exchange it for theology—that theology which seeks the kernel of the nut, the pulp of the wheat, the marrow of the bone. But however things may go, God is God. Man almost always errs in judgment; but this is our God forever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death."

When not engaged in studies directly connected with the duties of his office, Luther flew with eagerness to the Bible. He endeavoured to increase his knowledge of the original languages of the Bible, that he might be no longer dependent on translations, but derive his views of doctrine from the fountain head. In consequence of these studies, he was, within less than a year after his arrival at Wittemberg, honoured with the degree of bachelor of divinity, and directed to deliver a lecture every day on the Bible. He commenced these lectures by explaining the Psalms; and then took up the Epistle to the Romans. He found this exercise interesting and instructive not only to his pupils, but to himself. He gained a deeper insight into the method of a sinner's justification, and into the springs and motives of the

Christian life. One passage in particular was specially dear to him, not only at this period but ever afterwards: *The just shall live by faith.*

These lectures of Luther were different from any which had ever before been heard in Germany. He stood before his auditors, not as an eloquent rhetorician, or a pedantic schoolman, but as a minister of Christ, who drew his instructions from the Bible and from the treasury of his own heart. The fame of his teaching very soon began to spread, and students in great numbers were drawn together to enjoy it. And not only students, but learned professors and doctors often mingled in the crowd that gathered around him. The celebrated Martin Pollich of Mellerstadt, after hearing him, said, "This monk will put all the doctors to the rout. He will introduce a new style of doctrine, and reform the whole church. He builds upon the word of Christ; and no one in this world can resist or overthrow that word, though it should be attacked with all the weapons of philosophers, sophists, Albertists, Scotists, and Thomists."

At the earnest solicitation of his friend Staupitz, Luther commenced preaching in the church of the Augustines. It was an old wooden chapel, thirty feet long and twenty broad, whose walls, propped on all sides, were falling to ruins. "That building," remarks one of the historians of the Reformation,* "may well be compared to the stable in which Christ was born. It was in that old building that God willed (if we may so speak) that his beloved Son should be born a second time. Amongst the thousand splendid cathedrals and parish churches with which the world was filled, not one was chosen in which to publish the announcement of everlasting life."

In this chapel, Luther opened his public ministry at Wittemberg; but the crowds who came together to hear him, soon rendered it necessary to seek more spacious accommodations. The council of Wittemberg selected him for their minister, and invited him to preach in the great church of the city. His labours here were equally commanding and attractive. "Possessing," says one of his adversaries, "a lively intelligence and a retentive memory, and speaking his mother tongue with remarkable fluency, Luther was surpassed in eloquence by none of his contemporaries. Addressing his hearers from his place in the pulpit, as if he had been agitated by some powerful passion, and adapting his actions to the words, he affected their minds in a surprising manner, and carried them like a torrent whither he would."*

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* Myconius.

This life of useful public labour, succeeding to the melancholy musings of the cloister, was just that which Luther needed. Freedom, employment, earnest and regular action, completed the re-establishment of harmony and peace in his spirit. He was now, at last, in his proper place, and the work of the Lord was prospering around him.

It was while he was diligently pursuing his course of instruction both in the university and in the church, that he was interrupted by an appointment to go on an embassy to Rome. A difference had arisen between several of the Augustinian convents and the Vicar-general Staupitz, and Luther was commissioned to lay the matter before the pontiff, and effect an adjustment.

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* Raymond.

He commenced his journey, and crossed the Alps; but no sooner had he arrived in Italy, than he found matter of surprise and scandal at every step. He lodged at a convent of the Benedictines in Lombardy. This convent had an annual revenue of thirty-six thousand ducats; and the buildings, the furniture, the provisions of the table, the style of living, all were on a scale of the utmost extravagance. Every thing was fitted to surprise the poor monk of Wittemberg; but he remained silent until Friday, when, to his amazement, he found the table loaded with an abundance of meats. "The pope and the church forbid such things," said he; and threatened the monks, in case they persisted, to report their irregularities at Rome. The Benedictines were offended at his rebuke, and intended privately to put him out of the way; but he left them, and pursued his journey to Bologna. He was detained here for a time by a fit of sickness, occasioned, as some thought, by poison, administered by the angry monks of Lombardy;

but at length he recovered, and went forward to Rome.

His feelings, as he approached the eternal city, were raised to the highest pitch of enthusiasm. Here had been the home of Plautus and Virgil, and all those renowned scholars of antiquity, whose works and whose history had so often stirred his heart. Here, too, was the scene of Paul's labours and sufferings; the church to which he addressed his most laboured epistle; the hired house in which he lived; the earth which drank his blood; and with which had mingled the ashes of a thousand martyrs. And here was the queen of all the churches; the seat of the holy vicar of Christ; the metropolis of the whole Christian world. For it must be remembered that Luther, at this time, was a most devout Romanist. He had been enlightened in regard to many important Christian doctrines; he had felt the power of divine grace in his heart; but he had not ceased to regard the pope, in all the plenitude of his assumed character, and the church over which he presided, with its imposing array of rituals and cardinals, as the proper arbitress of Christendom. He had supposed, too, that Rome must exceed all other churches as much in sanctity as in dignity; that as it was the most sacred of all places under heaven, so it must be proportionally the most holy. With these impressions fastened on his mind, it is not strange that his enthusiasm was enkindled as he approached the seven-hilled city. When he actually saw its towers in the distance, it is not strange that he fell prostrate on the earth, exclaiming, "Holy Rome, I salute thee!"

The impressions of Luther as to the superior sanctity of Rome, continued for a time after his entrance into the city. He visited the numerous churches and chapels; gave credit to all the marvellous stories that were told him; went through, with devotion, the observances required; and was pleased at being able to perform so many pious acts from which his friends at home were debarred. He even regretted (so he afterwards assures us) that his father and mother were not already dead, that he might have the privilege of delivering them from the fires of purgatory, by his masses, his prayers, and other admirable works. But as Luther prolonged his stay at Rome, and mingled more freely with the priests and people, his faith as to its transcendent holiness was sorely shaken. He was shocked at the impious haste, the profane and heartless formality with which the clergy celebrated the sacraments. He was shocked at finding so many *infidels* at Rome; men who denied the immortality of the soul, and affirmed the orthodox faith to be only a cunning invention of the saints. He was shocked at the terrible state of morals in the city, exceeding in depravity all that he had ever heard or dreamed of. "It is incredible," says he, "what sins and atrocities are committed in Rome. They must be seen and heard to be believed; so that it is usual to say, *If there be a hell, Rome is built above it. It is an abyss from which all wickedness proceeds.*" As he mingled with prelates and the higher ecclesiastics, he found the same profane levity and heartless mockery of sacred things, which he had before observed in the inferior clergy; and there were none who seemed to notice it; none who reproved it. And when he looked to the pontifical throne, he saw nothing better. The bloodthirsty Julius II. was seated there, filling Italy with carnage and desolation, and hurling the firebrands of war and contention throughout the earth.

It was the least of the advantages of this embassy to Rome, that Luther accomplished successfully the immediate object of his mission. He improved the opportunity for purposes of study, taking lessons in Hebrew from a celebrated Jewish Rabbin. In the utter uselessness and absurdity of many of the enjoined observances, he was led to see, more clearly than ever before, the truth and importance of the great doctrine of his life; that of justification by faith alone. But more especially, the veil of reputed sanctity was torn away, and he was enabled to discover the true character of Rome. Instead of superior holiness, as he had before imagined, he saw her all putrid in her own corruptions; and he turned away from her with loathing and disgust. At a later period of life, Luther felt deeply the importance of this visit to Rome. "Not for a hundred thousand florins," said he, "would I have missed the opportunity of seeing Rome."

The object of his mission being accomplished, Luther left Rome, and returned to Wittemberg.

At the earnest solicitation of Staupitz, he shortly afterwards received the degree of doctor in divinity, with special reference to his vocation as a *teacher of the Bible*. By a public and solemn oath, he now bound and engaged himself, "to teach the Scriptures faithfully, to preach them in purity, to study them all his days, and to defend them, so far as God should enable him, by disputation and writing, against false teachers." To this solemn engagement he often referred in subsequent life, in justification of his resistance to the superstitions of Rome. He was called, he said, "by the university, by his sovereign, in the name of the imperial majesty, and of the Roman see itself, and bound before God by the most sacred of oaths," to become the champion of the Bible, and to defend it against all the corruptions of men. The event here referred to has been regarded by some of his biographers as constituting the third step in his preparation for the great work before him. His entrance into the convent had turned his thoughts decidedly towards God; his spiritual discovery of the method of a sinner's salvation had delivered his soul from bondage and fear; while the oath he had now taken constituted him the reformer of the church.

The first objects of his attack were the philosophers and schoolmen, whom he had studied so deeply, and who now reigned supreme in all the universities. He boldly undertook to hurl them from the throne which they had so long occupied, and where they exercised so commanding an influence over the minds and hearts of men. He also united himself with Reuchlin, Erasmus, Hutten, and other distinguished champions of critical learning, in their controversy with the monks. It was about this time that his intimacy with Spalatin commenced—a friendship of the utmost importance to him ; since Spalatin was chaplain and private secretary to the elector, and was the only medium through which Luther could have access to his sovereign's ear. His preaching at the church in Wittemberg was in demonstration of the Spirit and with power, and was listened to by multitudes of all ranks with the deepest interest. He preached a series of discourses on the ten commandments, which have been preserved to us, under the name of declamations for the people. He preached against the multiform superstitions of the age; such as "signs and omens, the observance of particular days and months, familiar demons, phantoms, influences of the stars, incantations, metamorphoses, incubi and succubi, the patronage of saints, and other like things," endeavouring with a strong hand to cast down these false gods, one after another, to the ground. But especially did he show the difference between the law and the gospel, and refute the error, so predominant in that age, that men, by their *own works*, obtain remission of sins, and are made righteous before God. "The desire to justify ourselves," said he, "is the spring of all our distress of heart; but he who receives *Christ as a Saviour* has peace; and not only peace, but purity of soul. All sanctification is the fruit of faith, for faith in us is a divine work, which *changes us*, and gives us a *new birth*, emanating from God himself. It kills Adam in us, and, through the Holy Spirit, it gives us a new heart, and makes us new men." Thus Luther laboured more and more to make all men understand the great essential doctrines of conversion, faith, the forgiveness of sins and the consolations of the Spirit. At the same time he interfered not at all with the appointed ceremonies of the church. The established discipline had not, in all Christendom, a more faithful observer and defender than he.

In the year 1516, during the temporary absence of the Vicar-general Staupitz, Luther was commissioned to take his place, and to visit the monasteries of Misnia and Thuringia. In the course of this visitation, he came to Erfurth, to exercise the functions of vicar-general in the same convent, where, eleven years before, he had wound up the clock, opened the gates, and swept the floor of the church. In this place, as in all other places which he visited, he gave the most judicious advice, and left behind him a favourable impression. "Do not," said he to the monks, "join yourselves to Aristotle, or to the other teachers of a misleading philosophy, but apply yourselves to the study of the divine word. Seek not your salvation in your own strength and good works, but in the grace of God and the merits of Jesus." Luther returned to Wittemberg, after an absence of six weeks, happy in the conviction that his labour had not been in vain. He had sown much good seed in the different Augustinian convents, and in a little time it sprang up and bore valuable fruit. Some of the most strenuous defenders of the Reformation came forth, subsequently, from these convents.

Luther now resumed his usual occupations, and was, by his own account, overwhelmed with labour. "I require," said he, "almost continually two secretaries; for I do scarce any thing else, all day long, than write letters. I am preacher to the convent, reader of prayers at table, pastor and parish minister, director of studies, vicar of the priory, inspector of the fish-ponds at Litzkau, counsel to the inns of Herzberg, lecturer on St. Paul, and commentator on the Psalms. Seldom have I time to say my prayers, or to sing a hymn; not to mention my struggle with flesh and blood, the devil and the world. See what an idle man I am."

The plague, at this time, broke out at Wittemberg, and a great number of the teachers and students left the town. But Luther remained. "I do not know," he writes, "whether the plague will suffer me to finish the epistle to the Galatians. Quick and sudden in its attack, it makes great havoc, especially among the young. You advise me to flee; but whither shall I flee? I hope the world will not go to pieces, if brother Martin should fall.* If the plague spreads, I will send the brethren away in all directions; but, for my own part, I am placed here, nor does obedience allow me to leave the spot, until He who called me hither shall call me away. Not that I am above the fear of death; for I am not the Apostle Paul, but only his commentator; but I trust the Lord will deliver me from the fear of it, when it comes." Such were the courage and resolution of Luther, before he commenced his attacks upon Rome. No wonder he did not shrink, through the fear of death, afterwards.

In July, 1517, Duke George of Saxony requested Staupitz to send him a learned and eloquent preacher. Staupitz sent Luther, recommending him as a man of great learning and of irreproachable character. Luther went and preached at Dresden, in the chapel of the castle, on St. James's day. He was listened to by the duke and all his court, and his discourse was blessed to the hopeful conversion of some two or three individuals. But his audience, in general, were not benefited. The duke was displeased because, as he thought, the preacher disparaged good works; and he became, in subsequent life, one of the most violent enemies of the Reformation. It was here that Luther first became acquainted with Emser, who was secretary and counsellor to the duke, and with whom, in the progress of things, he engaged more than once in open controversy.

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* Luther did not then know of how much importance his life was to the world.

It was a custom of the philosophers and theologians, in the times of which we speak, to awaken interest and provoke discussion, by publishing *theses*, or a string of connected propositions, relating to some controverted subject. Luther's first theses, of which we have any account, were put forth in the year 1516, and led to a very earnest discussion of the doctrines of human depravity, the necessity of divine grace, and of salvation by Christ alone.

In the summer of 1517 he published ninety-nine propositions on the kindred subjects of free-will and grace, in which it was his object not to deny the free agency of man, but to insist that, in his natural state, man is under what the Scriptures call *the bondage of cor-*

ruption, and needs the grace of God to set him free. These propositions were sent to several of the universities, particularly those of Erfurth and Ingolstadt; but they awakened no extended interest, and led to no controversy;—a plain proof that the Romish church, at that period, was not so much concerned about the doctrines of its members as about its own revenues and supremacy. A person might hold and teach almost any thing, in the way of theological speculation, and if he was careful to touch, as Erasmus said, neither "the pope's crown nor the monks' bellies," he was pretty likely to escape unhurt.

But the time had now come when Luther regarded himself as called to touch these tender points. For several centuries the sale of indulgences had been carried on, to a greater or less extent, in the church of Rome. Indulgences, at the first, were but the commutation or remission of ecclesiastical censures. A person, by some act, had incurred the censure of the church, and must perform an enjoined penance before receiving absolution. But in place of the penance the church agreed to accept a sum of money. "Pay me so much money," said the priest, "and I will give you a certificate of satisfaction or absolution;" which certificate was called an indulgence. These indulgences originally had respect only to past offences; but when once introduced they were soon extended to sins in prospect. "Pay me so much money, and I will absolve you from any intended or contemplated act of sin." They were extended, too, after a time, so as to remove not only the inflictions of the church in this world, but divine punishments in the world to come. And persons were represented as able, by the payment of money, not only to save themselves from future miseries, but to rescue their friends, also, who were already suffering in purgatorial fire.

The sale of indulgences commenced with the bishops; but the pontiffs, perceiving the advantages of the traffic, soon contrived to get it into their own hands. To give to it a degree of plausibility and support, a new doctrine was invented in the twelfth century, which was improved and perfected by Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth, viz. that, in addition to the merits of Christ, there is an immense treasury of good works, which holy men have performed over and above what duty required; and that the Roman pontiff is the keeper and distributer of this treasure; so that he is able, out of this inexhaustible fund, to give and transfer to every one such an amount of good works as his necessities require, or as will suffice to avert the punishment of his sins. Such is the theory of Romish indulgences; and such, in few words, is their early history.

Indulgences had been sold from time to time by the popes, under pretence of raising money for the crusades, or to carry on war against the Turks, or for the extirpation of heretics; in short, whenever the court of Rome needed money, and some plausible pretext could be invented to justify the measure. The common method of procedure, in such cases, was to "farm out" the indulgences: for the papal court could not always wait to have the money collected and conveyed from every country of Europe; and there were wealthy merchants, here and there, who stood ready to purchase the indulgences for particular provinces, and would be sure to sell them so as to secure a good bargain to themselves.

Leo X. was advanced to the pontifical throne in the year 1513. By his magnificence, his indolence, his love of show, his prodigal expenses of various kinds, he soon emptied his coffers and reduced himself to pecuniary straits. In these circumstances, and under pretence of raising money to complete the erection of St. Peter's church, which had been begun by his predecessor, he commenced, on a large scale, the dispensing of indulgences. The promulgation of these indulgences throughout Germany was intrusted to Albert, Archbishop of Mentz, who was himself to receive a share of the profits. The pope and the archbishop, having thus divided beforehand the spoils of Germany, it was necessary to find some one of sufficient address and impudence to hawk their indulgences and bring in the profits. This service was first offered to the Franciscans, who very prudently declined it. But the Dominicans were forward to take part in the lucrative trade; and John Tetzel, a brother of their order, who had already had some experience in such matters, hastened to Mentz, and tendered his services to the archbishop. He was accepted; and the manner in which he discharged the office is thus described by a recent historian.*

Tetzel drove "through the country in a gay carriage, escorted by three horsemen, in great state, and spending freely. One might have thought him some dignitary on a royal progress, with his attendants and officers, and not a common dealer or a begging monk. When the procession approached a town, a messenger waited on the chief magistrate, with the proclamation: *The grace of God and of the holy Father is at your gates!* Instantly every thing in the place was in motion. The clergy, the priests, the nuns, the council, the schoolmasters, the different trades with their flags, men and women, young and old, went forth to meet the holy merchants, with lighted tapers in their hands, advancing to the sound of music and of all the bells in the place; so that (as one remarks) they could hardly have given a grander welcome to God himself. Salutations being exchanged, the whole procession moved towards the church. The pontiff's bull of grace was borne in front, on a velvet cushion or a cloth of gold. The vender of indulgences followed, supporting a large red wooden cross; and the whole procession moved in this manner amidst singing, prayers and the smoke of incense. With the sound of organs and other musical instruments the monkish dealer and his attendants were received into the church. The red cross was erected in front of the altar, on which was hung the pope's arms; and as long as it remained there, the clergy of the place, the penitentiaries and the sub-commissioners, with white wands in their hands, came every day after vespers, or before the salutation, to do homage to it."

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* D'Aubigné.

Tetzel, at this time, was somewhat advanced in life; but his voice was sonorous, and he seemed to be yet in the prime of his strength. He had an allowance of eighty florins per month, and all his expenses paid. His port and equipage were imposing, but his moral character was notoriously bad. He had been convicted at Inspruck of such abominable profligacy, that he came near paying the forfeit of his life. The Emperor Maximilian ordered that he should be sewed up in a sack and thrown into the river; but the Elector Frederic of Saxony interceded for him and obtained his pardon. There could hardly have been found, in all the cloisters of Germany, a man more adapted to the traffic in which he was engaged. To the theology of a monk, and the zeal and spirit of an inquisitor, he united the greatest effrontery. He had an admirable tact in the invention of stories with which to amuse common people. No means came amiss to him which were likely to fill his coffers. "Lifting up his voice, and giving loose to a coarse volubility, he offered his indulgences to all comers, and excelled any salesman at a fair in recommending his merchandise."

As soon as the red cross was elevated with the pope's arms upon it, Tetzel mounted the pulpit, and, with a bold tone, began to exalt the efficacy of indulgences. The people listened and wondered at the admirable virtues ascribed to them. "Indulgences," said he, "are the most precious and sublime of God's gifts. This cross" (pointing to the red cross) "has as much efficacy as the cross of Jesus Christ. Draw near, and I will give you letters, duly sealed, by which even the sins you shall hereafter desire to commit shall be forgiven you. I would not exchange my privileges for those of St. Peter in heaven; for I have saved more souls with my indulgences than he with his sermons. There is no sin so great that the indulgence cannot remit it. Even if any one (which is doubtless impossible) should ravish the holy Virgin Mother of God, let him pay largely, and it shall be forgiven him.

"But more than all this; indulgences save, not the living only, but the dead. The very moment that the money clinks against the bottom of the chest, the soul escapes from purgatory, and flies free to heaven. Ye priests, ye nobles, ye tradesmen, ye wives, ye maidens, and ye young men; hearken to your departed parents and friends, who cry to you from the bottomless pit: 'We are enduring the most horrible torments! A small alms would deliver us! You *can* give it, and you will not!'

"O senseless people, and almost like beasts, who do not comprehend the grace so richly offered! This day, heaven is on all sides open. Do you now refuse to enter? When, then, do you intend to come in? This day you may redeem many souls. Dull and heedless man, with ten groschen you can deliver your father from purgatory; and you are so ungrateful that you will not do it. In the day of judgment, *my* conscience will be clear; but *you* will be punished the more severely, for neglecting so great a salvation. I protest, that though you had only one coat, you ought to strip it off and sell it, to purchase this grace. Our Lord God no longer deals with us as God; he has given all power to the pope."

Having exhausted his subject in this direction, the eloquent preacher then turned to another topic. "Do you know why our lord the pope distributes so rich a grace? The dilapidated church of St. Peter and St. Paul is to be restored, so as to be without a parallel in the whole earth. That church contains the bodies of the holy apostles, Peter and Paul, and a vast company of martyrs. Owing to the present condition of the edifice, those sacred bodies are now, alas! continually trodden down, flooded, polluted, dishonoured, and rotting in rain and hail. Ah! shall those holy ashes be suffered any longer to remain thus degraded!"

The motive here presented never failed to produce an impression on many hearers. There was an eager desire to aid poor Leo X., who had not the means of sheltering from the hail and rain the bodies of Peter and Paul.

The preacher next proceeded to anathematize all those who should dispute or oppose his mission; and then turning to the docile portion of his audience, and impiously perverting a passage of Scripture, he said, "Blessed are the eyes that see what ye see; for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see the things which ye see, and have not seen them, and to hear the things which ye hear, and have not heard them."

After finishing his address, it was the custom of Tetzel to point to his strong box, and cry out to the people, "Now bring your money! Bring money! Bring money!" "He uttered this cry," says Luther, "with such a dreadful bellowing, that one might have thought some wild bull was rushing among the people, and goring them with his horns."

The sermon being ended, the commissioner of indulgences was considered as having established his throne in the place with due solemnity. The people then came in crowds to the assistant confessors. They came, not with contrite hearts, but with money in their hands. Men and women, the young, the poor, and those who were dependent on public charity, every one then found money. The absolving priest, after again explaining and extolling the indulgence, thus addressed the applicants: "How much money can you, in your conscience, spare, to obtain so perfect a remission?" The object of this question was to impress the consciences of the applicants, and lead them to contribute with greater liberality.

When the faithful had confessed, (and this took them but a little while,) they hastened directly to the vender. Only one person was commissioned to sell, and he had his counter hard by the cross. He carefully scrutinized all who came, examining their step, their manner and attire, and demanded a sum in proportion to their apparent circumstances. Kings, queens, princes, archbishops and bishops were to pay for an ordinary indulgence twenty-five ducats; abbots, counts and barons, ten ducats; other nobles, and all who had an annual income of five hundred florins, six ducats. Those whose income was only two hundred florins, paid one ducat; the rest, in general, paid half a florin. For particular sins, Tetzel had a private scale. Polygamy was charged six ducats; sacrilege and perjury, nine; murder, eight; and witchcraft, two.

With all his effrontery and subtilty, Tetzel found some dealers who were too cunning for him. A Saxon gentleman, who had heard him at Leipsic, inquired if he was authorized to pardon sins of intention, or such as the applicant intended to commit. "Assuredly," answered Tetzel; "full power is given me by the pope to do so." "Well," returned the gentleman, "I wish to be revenged on one of my enemies, without attempting his life. I will pay you ten crowns for a letter of indulgence that shall bear me harmless." Tetzel demurred, but at length the bargain was concluded for thirty crowns. Shortly after, Tetzel departed from Leipsic. The gentleman, attended by his servants, waylaid him in a wood, between Juterboch and Treblin, fell upon him, gave him a sound drubbing, and carried off his chest of money. Tetzel clamoured against this act of violence, and brought an action before the judges. But the gentleman produced his indulgence, signed by Tetzel himself, which exempted him beforehand from all responsibility; and by this means he was acquitted.

By this abominable traffic, the minds of the people were greatly agitated, and the subject was everywhere discussed. Opinions were divided, some believing and others disbelieving; but by the sober part of the German nation, the whole system of indulgences was rejected with disgust. The doctrine was so entirely opposed to Scripture and to sound sense, that all men, who had any knowledge of the Bible, or any natural acuteness, could not but condemn it, and only waited for a favourable opportunity to express their opposition. Some turned it into an invincible argument against the benevolence or charity of the pope. "Why," said they, "does not his holiness deliver at once all the souls from purgatory, by a holy charity, and on account of the dreadful misery of those souls, since he is able to free so great a number, for the sake of perishable gain?"

A poor miner of Schneeberg, meeting a seller of indulgences, inquired, "Must we then believe, what you have often said, that we can redeem a soul from purgatory, by casting a penny into the chest?" The seller affirmed that it was even so. "Ah," replied the miner, "what a cruel man the pope must be, thus to leave a poor soul to suffer so long for a wretched penny! If he has no ready money, let him collect a few thousand crowns, and deliver all these souls at once."

As remarked above, the people of Germany were thoroughly weary of this shameful traffic. They could no longer endure the impositions of what Luther calls these Romish tricksters. Yet no bishop or divine dared to lift a finger in opposition to their quackery and deceit. The minds of men were in suspense and trouble. They were waiting to see if God would not raise up some powerful instrument for the work that was required to be done. But as yet, such an one was nowhere visible.

CHAPTER IV.

Luther refuses absolution on the ground of indulgences—Tetzel's anger—Luther preaches on the subject—Publishes his theses on indulgences—The elector's dream—Rapid circulation of the theses—Effects on different minds—Attacked by Tetzel and the Dominicans—Tetzel's antitheses burned at Wittemberg—Controversy with Prierias—With Hochstraten—With Dr. Eck—Luther's labours as preacher and teacher—His journey to Heidelberg—His dispute there on law and grace—Martin Bucer converted—Luther returns to Wittemberg.

Luther first heard of the traffic of Tetzel in the year 1516, while he was on his tour of visitation to the convents. Some of the extravagant expressions of Tetzel being reported to him, he was indignant, and exclaimed, "God willing, I will make a hole in his drum."

Owing to the influence of Staupitz and the wisdom of the elector, Tetzel was forbidden to preach up his indulgences in Saxony. But he approached as near to the confines of Saxony as he could. He set up his red cross at Juterboch, which was only four miles from

Wittemberg, and proclaimed, in the strongest terms, the value of his merchandise. The people flocked in crowds from Wittemberg to the indulgence market at Juterboch.

Luther, at this period, had the utmost respect for the pope and the church. "I was," says he, "a monk and a papist, so infatuated and and even steeped in the Romish doctrines, that I could willingly have helped to kill any person who should have dared to refuse the smallest act of obedience to the pope." Still, he was zealous for those holy truths which he had learned from the Scriptures, and which had proved the means of salvation to his soul. "I was a young doctor," says he again, "fresh from the anvil, glowing and rejoicing in the glory of the Lord."

Luther was one day at the confessional in Wittemberg, when several of the people of the town presented themselves before him for absolution. They confessed themselves guilty of great irregularities, such as adultery, licentiousness, unjust gains, &c., and declared their purpose of persisting in these practices; and yet they claimed absolution. And when questioned as to the ground of such a claim, they appealed to their letters of indulgence. But Luther told them that he should pay no regard to their papers, and assured them, that unless they turned from the evil of their way, they must all perish. They professed to be greatly surprised at this, and renewed their application. But Luther was immovable. They must "cease to do evil, and learn to do well," or *no absolution.* These people now returned immediately to Tetzel, and told him that a monk at Wittemberg treated his letters with contempt. At this Tetzel literally bellowed with anger. He preached on the subject, using the most insulting expressions and terrific anathemas. To strike the people with the more terror, he kindled a fire several times in the grand square, pretending that he had orders from the pope to burn the heretics who should dare oppose his most holy indulgences.

Luther also preached on the subject, setting forth the freeness of the gospel salvation, and the utter inefficacy of all human endeavours to purchase or merit the forgiveness of sin. He earnestly dissuaded his hearers from having any thing to do with papal indulgences, or placing the least reliance upon them. "And if some cry," said he, " that I am a heretic, because the truth which I preach is prejudicial to their coffers, I pay little regard to such clamours. They proceed from men who have never read the Christian doctrine, or understood their own teachers, or felt the truths of the Bible, but are perishing in the tattered rags of their vain opinions." This sermon was printed, and made a deep impression on all who read it. Tetzel replied to it, and Luther rejoined; but this was done at a later period.

Notwithstanding all that Luther had said and done, Tetzel still continued his odious traffic, and his impious, blasphemous addresses to the people. What course shall Luther now pursue? Shall he submit, and keep silence? Or shall he speak out in a more public and solemn manner than before? His resolution was soon formed. The feast of All Saints was at hand, and was expected to be a very important day at Wittemberg. On the evening preceding that day—the evening of the 31st of October, 1517—without giving to any of his friends the least intimation of his plan, Luther went boldly to church, towards which crowds of pilgrims were already flocking, and affixed to the door

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ninety-five theses, or propositions, in opposition to the doctrine of indulgences. In a preamble, he declared, that he had written these theses in a spirit of charity, and with an earnest desire of bringing the truth to light. He also announced that he would be prepared, the next day, to defend them at the university against all opposers.

It is very evident from these theses themselves, that Luther, at this time, was but partially enlightened in regard to the evil of indulgences, or the corruptions of that church of which he was a member. He had no thought of attacking the pope or the church. So far from this, he presumed that he should have both in his favour, in his attempts to restrain the effrontery of the monks.

It is related by Seckendorf, and several others, that on the night preceding the posting of these theses on the church door, the Elector of Saxony had a remarkable dream. He dreamed that the Almighty sent a monk to him, accompanied by all the saints, who testified in his favour, with the request that he would allow the monk to write something on the church-door at Wittemberg. This request was, of course, granted. Whereupon the monk began to write. But the pen that he used was so long, that the upper end of it reached even unto Rome, wounded the ears of a lion (Leo) that was couched there, and shook the triple crown on the pope's head. The lion, being disturbed with the pen, began to roar with all his might, so that the whole city of Rome and all the states of the holy empire ran to inquire what was the matter. The pope called upon all the cardinals and princes to restrain the monk; and, "particularly," relates the elector, "upon *me*, because he lived in my country." All the princes of the empire were now seen flocking one after another to Rome, trying to break the monk's pen; but all in vain. The more they tried to break it, the stiffer it became. It resisted as if it were made of iron. Upon being asked where he had obtained his pen, the monk replied, "It once belonged to the wing of a goose in Bohemia.* I received it from one of my old school-masters. Its strength lies in its pith, which no one can take out of it." "Suddenly," says the elector, "I heard a loud cry; for from the monk's long pen had issued a great many other pens. At this, I awoke, and it was daylight."

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* John Huss was a Bohemian; and Huss, in the Bohemian dialect, signifies *goose*.

Thus much for the dream. The fact is well attested, that the elector actually had such a dream; and events soon began to show its interpretation. The evening following the night of the dream, a monk commenced writing on the door of the church in Wittemberg. His pen may be said to have reached to Rome. It roused up the lion couching there, and shook the tiara on the head of the pope. And the greater the efforts made to break this pen, the stiffer it became. It produced other similar pens; and the writing went on, and the Reformation spread in all directions.

The Reformation had something more substantial to rest upon, than dreams or visions. But who shall say, that God did not design to instruct the good elector in the visions of the night? And who can tell how much influence this instruction may have had on the mind of the elector, to prevent him from prematurely opposing and crushing the infant Reformation?

The day following the placarding of the theses, no one appeared at the university to impugn them. The traffic of Tetzel was so utterly disreputable, that no one, except himself or some one of his followers, could be expected to accept the challenge. Nevertheless, the theses spread with the rapidity of lightning. It seemed as if the angels themselves had been the bearers of them. In the space of a fortnight, they were read all over Germany; and within a month, they ran through Christendom, and penetrated even to Rome. They were translated into Dutch and Spanish, and some of them were carried as far as Jerusalem. "Every one," said Luther, "was complaining of the indulgences; and as all the bishops kept silence, and no one was inclined to take the bull by the horns, poor Luther became a famous doctor; because, at last, said they, *one* has been found who dares to grapple with him. But I did not like all this glory. The song was set on too high a key for my voice."

To form an idea of the various and prodigious effects which the theses produced in Germany, we must in imagination follow them wherever they penetrated; into the palaces of princes, the cells of the monks, the studies of the learned, and the cottages of the common people.

The venerable Reuchlin received a copy of them; and the strength and courage which they evinced cheered the depressed spirits of the old champion of letters, and gave new joy to his drooping heart. "Thanks be to God," he exclaimed, "the monks have now found a man who will give them so much to do, that they will be glad to leave my old age to pass away in peace." Erasmus received a copy of them, and secretly rejoiced to see his desire for the reform of abuses, so courageously expressed. "God has sent a physician," said he, "who *eats into the flesh;* because without such an one, the disorder would become incurable." The pious Bishop of Wurtzburg received and read the theses with joy, and immediately wrote to the Elector Frederic, advising him to retain and protect Luther. The Emperor Maximilian, who was then living, was not displeased with the doctrine of the theses. He, too, wrote a letter to the elector, advising him to take care of and protect Luther. "The time may come," said he, "when we shall have need of him." Even Leo X. at first regarded the theses more as a friend of learning and genius, than as a pope; and when he was urged to proceed against Luther as a heretic, he replied, "This Martin Luther is a man of talents, and all that is said against him is mere monkish jealousy."

The different orders of monks seem to have been variously affected by the bold propositions of Luther. The more pious among them rejoiced and thanked God; while those who sought in monastic seclusion a life of indolence and indulgence, or the reverence of their fellow-men, heaped reproaches on the reformer's name. The common people generally, who understood little of the theological question, and only knew that Luther protested against the extortions of the monks and friars, received the news of his proceedings with great joy.

But while some opposed and others rejoiced, a third class viewed the matter with trembling apprehension. Among this number was the Elector Frederic. Cautious and prudent from his very nature, he saw with consternation what tumults and contentions this little fire might kindle; and he gave repeated intimations to Luther of his uneasiness on the subject.

The celebrated historian, Albert Kranz, was lying on his death-bed when the theses were brought to him. "Thou hast truth on thy side," said he, "brother Martin; but thou wilt not succeed. Poor monk! Get thee to thy cell, and cry, O God, have mercy on me!"

Even Luther himself, after the first acclamations were over, and he found himself alone in the church, with the terrible power of Rome against him, could not help feeling dejected and dismayed. Doubts, which he thought he had overcome, returned upon him with new force. For him, a poor, single-handed, contemptible monk, to resist that voice which nations and ages had humbly obeyed, and oppose himself to that church which he had been accustomed from his infancy to revere—it was too much. No subsequent step cost him so much as this; and this it was which decided the fate of the Reformation. "I began this affair," says Luther, "with much fear and trembling. What was I at that time? A poor, wretched, contemptible friar—more like a corpse than a man! Who was I, to oppose the pope's majesty, before which not only the kings of the earth and the whole world trembled, but (if I may so speak) heaven and hell were constrained to obey the slightest intimations of his will. No one can know what I suffered at the first, and in what dejection and despair I was often plunged." But God raised up some powerful friends to the reformer, at this period of trial, by whom he was comforted and encouraged. Among these was Spalatin, who has been before mentioned as private secretary, chaplain and counsellor to the elector. Another was Scheurl, the town-clerk of Nuremburg; and still another was Albert Durer, a celebrated German painter.

But Luther's courage was aroused, not so much by the countenance of friends, as by the indiscreet and violent opposition of enemies. Tetzel and the Dominicans, eager to crush the audacious monk, who had disturbed their traffic, and to conciliate the favour of the Roman pontiff, raised at once a shout of indignation; affirmed that to attack indulgences was to attack the pope himself; and summoned to their assistance all the monks and divines of their school.

About a month after the publication of Luther's theses, Tetzel left the vicinity of Wittemberg, and repaired to the university of Frankfort on the Oder; where, by the help of Wimpina, one of the professors, he prepared two series of anti-theses—the first in defence of the doctrine of indulgences, and the second of the papal authority; and appointed the 20th of January, 1518, as the time for a public disputation.

When the day arrived, a large company assembled to be present at the dispute, particularly the monks from the neighbouring cloisters. Tetzel read to them his theses, in which he repeated all that he had advanced before in respect to the value and efficacy of indulgences; and in which he extended the prerogatives and exalted the powers of the Roman pontiff in terms the most unmeasured and extravagant. His object in this was two-fold: First, that he might himself retreat, with all his disorders and scandals, under the cover of the pope's mantle; and second, that he might draw his opponent into direct and open conflict with Rome.

The monks assembled on this occasion were full of admiration of all that Tetzel had said; and the divines of the university were too much afraid of the suspicion of heresy to make any open opposition. There would have been, therefore, no dispute at all, had it not been for the boldness and faithfulness of one of the students, a young man about twenty years of age. Indignant at seeing the truth publicly trampled under foot, without any one offering himself in its defence, this excellent young man raised his voice, to the great surprise of the whole assembly, and to the utter dismay of the audacious Tetzel. This proud Dominican soon retreated from the contest, and left it in the hands of Doctor Wimpina, the individual who had assisted in preparing the theses. And he found himself so hard pressed by the student, that his only resort was to put an end to the discussion. Wimpina immediately promoted Tetzel to the rank of doctor, and sent away the troublesome student to a convent in Pomerania.

But Doctor Tetzel was not satisfied with the glory already received. He set up a pulpit and scaffold in one of the suburbs of Frankfort, from which he inveighed in the most furious manner, declaring that "the heretic, Luther, ought to be burned alive." Then placing the sermon of Luther, in opposition to indulgences, and also his theses, on the scaffold, he set fire to them and consumed them. He showed greater dexterity in this operation than he did in the dispute. There was none here to oppose him, and his victory was complete. The fire having done its office, the arrogant Dominican re-entered Frankfort in triumph.

These proceedings at Frankfort were but a signal to the whole company of Romish doctors. A shout was raised against Luther by the monks, and reproaches upon his name were sounded forth from all the Dominican pulpits. They called him a madman, a seducer, a wretch possessed with the devil. His teaching was decried as the most horrible of all heresies. "Wait only a fortnight," they said, "or at most a month, and that notorious heretic will be burned alive."

When Luther saw what course things were taking, his courage rose. He saw that it was necessary to face such adversaries boldly, and his intrepid spirit determined to do it. He did not, however, give way to those emotions of pride, which are so congenial to man's heart. "I have more difficulty," wrote he to Spalatin at this time, "to refrain from despising my adversaries, and so sinning against Christ, than I should have in vanquishing them. They are so ignorant, both of human and divine things, that it is humbling to have any controversy with them; and yet it is their very ignorance which gives them their inconceivable boldness and their brazen front."

Tetzel, after his auto-da-fé at Frankfort, hastened to send his theses into Saxony. They will serve, thought he, as an antidote to those of Luther. A messenger was despatched with a large bundle of them, to be distributed at Wittemberg. But the students prevented the intended distribution. They purchased a part of the bundle and seized on the remainder, and without consulting the authorities either of the town or the university, kindled a fire in the market-place and consumed them to ashes. One copy only escaped the flames, and this was placed in the hands of the reformer.

Luther, so far from being accessary to this act, as many supposed, was deeply grieved at it. "I am surprised," wrote he to one of his friends, "that you could think I had any thing to do with the burning of Tetzel's theses. Do you think I have utterly lost my senses? But what can I do? When a tale is told of me, any thing, and from every quarter, gains implicit confidence. Can I tie up men's tongues? No matter; let them tell, and hear, and report what they please. I will go on, so long as the Lord shall give me strength; and with God's help, I will fear nothing."

The Bishop of Brandenburg, who was Luther's ordinary, was grieved at seeing so important a controversy originating in his own diocess, and wished to stifle it. He first wrote to Luther, professing not to disapprove the doctrine of his theses, but desiring him, for the love of peace, and out of regard to his bishop, to say no more on the subject. After the proceedings at Frankfort, the bishop thought it necessary to come himself to Wittemberg. But finding Luther animated by that inward joy which springs from a good conscience, and resolved upon replying to his adversaries, the bishop returned in an angry mood to Brandenburg. From this time, he became more hostile to Luther, and sought his destruction. It was in the winter of 1518, while seated at his fireside, that the bishop said to those around him, "I will not lay down my head in peace, until I have cast Martin, like this fagot, into the fire;" at the same time casting down a fagot upon the blazing hearth. But in face of all his enemies, Martin was preserved from the fire, and lived to accomplish a reformation of which prelates and princes were unworthy.

A new antagonist now took the field against Luther, not in Germany, but at Rome. Leo X. still affected to treat the whole matter with the utmost contempt. "A squabble among the monks!" said he. "The best way is to take no notice of it." On another occasion he said, "It is a drunken German that has written these theses. When he is sober, he will talk very differently." The new antagonist of which we speak was Sylvester Prierias, master of the pontifical palace, and Prior-general of the Dominicans. He published a work, which he dedicated to Leo X., in which he spoke in the most contemptuous manner of the German monk, affirming that, "since it is the nature of dogs to bite, he believed that Luther must have had a dog for his father;" and inquiring whether he had indeed "an iron snout, and a head of brass, which it would be impossible to shatter." The point in controversy between Prierias and Luther was that respecting *the rule of faith and life to the Christian;*

the former declaring it to be *the pope and the church;* the latter that it was *the sacred Scriptures*, as opened and applied to the believer by the Holy Spirit. Prierias laid it down as an axiom: "Whosoever does not rely on the teaching of the Roman church, and the Roman pontiff, as the infallible rule of faith, and as that from which the Scriptures themselves derive their obligation and authority, is a heretic." But Luther refused to admit the axiom, affirming that both popes and councils might err, and often had erred, and saying, in the language of St. Augustine, "I have learned to render to the inspired Scriptures *alone* the homage of a firm belief."

The question here discussed between Prierias and Luther is obviously a fundamental one in every controversy with the Romanists. Grant them their *rule of faith*, and we shall be likely to grant them all the rest. But standing firmly on the great principle of the Reformation—that which Luther had so thoroughly learned, and which he was led thus early in the controversy to establish—that *the Bible and the Bible alone is the standard for Christians;* and the missiles of popery can never harm us. It is certain that popery has no foundation in the Bible.

Towards the conclusion of his work, Prierias adverts to the *ultima ratio* of the Romanists, and shows the cruel teeth of an inquisitor. "The Roman church," says he, "the supremacy of whose power, spiritual and temporal, is vested in the pope, can restrain, by the *secular arm*, those who, having first received the faith, afterwards depart from it. The church is under no obligation to employ *argument* to combat and overcome rebels." To this Luther replies, "Do you thirst for my *blood* then? I protest to you, that this bluster and menace of yours give me not the slightest alarm. For what if I were to lose my life? Christ still lives; Christ my Lord, and the Lord of all, blessed forever, Amen."

Scarcely was this controversy disposed of, before another Dominican took the field. It was James Hochstraten, the inquisitor of Cologne. He can hardly be said to have lost his temper in the contest, for he was quite out of temper when he commenced it. In place of argument, he satisfied himself with crying aloud for blood. "It is high treason against the church to suffer such a horrid heretic to live an hour longer. Away with him at once to the scaffold." Luther answered Hochstraten in few words, but with much vigour. "Out upon thee, thou senseless murderer, thirsting for thy brother's blood! I sincerely desire that *thou* shouldst not call me Christian and faithful. On the contrary, continue to decry me as a heretic. God knows what my purpose is, if my life should be spared. He will take care that my expectation shall not be disappointed."

Another attack, more trying to the feelings of Luther than either of the preceding, soon awaited him. It came from Doctor Eck, a celebrated professor at Ingolstadt, between whom and Luther there had before subsisted an intimate friendship. Eck was a doctor of the schools, not of the Bible. He was deeply versed in scholastic divinity, but not in the word of God. His performance, which he called "Obelisks," was characterized by much learning and subtilty, and by a pretended compassion for his "feeble adversary," through which a deeply disguised malice was distinctly visible. It was this latter quality of "the Obelisks" which roused the indignation of

Luther. Still, he was grieved at the thought that the blow had come from an old friend. "Can it be," thought he, "that the truth must be defended at such an expense—with the loss of the affection of former friends?"

But though the heart of Luther was wounded, his courage was not at all abated. So far from this, he seemed to kindle with fresh ardour for the contest. "Rejoice," said he to one of his friends, who had in like manner been attacked by a violent adversary—"rejoice, and let not these paper missiles terrify you. The more furious *my* adversaries become, the more I advance upon them. I leave the things that are behind for them to bark at, and stretch forward to those before, that they may bark at these also in their turn."

His reply to "the Obelisks" Luther denominated, in an equally fantastical title, "the Asterisks." It is a work full of life and energy, in which he shows that, in the performance of Eck, there is nought of the Scriptures, or of the fathers of the church, or of the ecclesiastical canons, but only the glosses of the schools, opinions, mere opinions, and dreams. He affirms that "the sovereign pontiff is a man, and may be led into error; but that God is truth itself, and cannot err." "As it would be an act of audacity," says he, "for any one to teach, as the philosophy of Aristotle, what cannot be proved on Aristotle's authority, much more audacious is it to affirm in the church what cannot be proved on the authority of Christ. And yet, where we do find in the Bible, that the treasure of Christ's merits is confided to the pope?"

Some of the mutual friends of Eck and of Luther endeavoured to heal the breach which this controversy had occasioned, and to restore their broken friendship; but it was too late. The distance between them grew wider and wider. Luther could yield nothing of what he regarded as essential truth, while the pride of Eck and his implacable temper led him rather to rise in his demands, than to make any abatement.

While engaged in these various controversies, sufficient, one would think, to engross the heart and occupy the whole time of Luther, he was still busy as ever in imparting instruction to his pupils, and in preaching and publishing for the benefit of the common people. It was at this time that he published his sermons on the ten commandments, which had been preached two years before in the church of Wittemberg. He also published an excellent treatise on the Lord's prayer, for the benefit, specially, of the unlearned laity. His fame as a public teacher and preacher of the gospel continually increased. The crowds which hung upon his lips in the church were greater than ever. He preached, about this time, his celebrated sermon on repentance and forgiveness; in which he distinguishes between that absolution from church censures which the priest may pronounce, and that inward pardon which can come only from the Lord. "The first reconciles the offender with the church; but it is the second, which is the heavenly grace, that reconciles the soul to God. If a man does not find in himself that peace of conscience, that joy of heart, which springs from God's remission of sin, there is no indulgence that can help him, though he should buy all that had ever been offered on earth. The remission of sins," in this internal and more important sense, "is out of the power of pope, bishop, priest, or any man living, and rests solely on the word of Christ, and on thine own faith. For Christ did not design that our comfort, our hope and our salvation should be built on a word or work of man, but solely on himself and on his word." These truths seem plain and familiar to us now, but when Luther first announced them in Germany, they were surprising truths. The people had so long been accustomed to regard the priest as standing between them and God—to confess to him, and receive absolution from him, that when his mediation was removed, and they were directed to look to God alone for forgiveness, in the exercise of repentance and faith, the preacher was thought to bring strange things to their ears.

In the spring of the year 1518 the order of the Augustinians held a general meeting at Heidelberg; and Luther, as being one of the most distinguished men of his order, was summoned to attend. His friends, sensible of the extreme danger to which the journey must expose him, endeavoured to dissuade him from undertaking it; but in vain. Luther never allowed himself to be stopped short, in the performance of what he conceived to be his duty, by the fear of danger. Accordingly, having made the necessary preparation, he set out on foot about the middle of April. He encountered neither danger nor difficulty, except that, before his journey was half accomplished, he found himself quite overcome with fatigue. From Coburg he wrote back to his friends, "All goes well, by God's favour, only I must acknowledge myself to have sinned in undertaking this journey on foot. But I have no need of any indulgence on account of the sin, for my contrition is perfect and the satisfaction plenary. I am exhausted with fatigue and all the conveyances are full. Is not this enough, and more than enough, of penance, contrition and satisfaction?" At Wurtzburg he met his friend, the Vicar-general Staupitz, and had a seat in his carriage for the remainder of the journey.

During his stay at Heidelberg, Luther received all the attention and kindness he could desire. He was invited repeatedly to the castle and table of the count palatine, Duke of Bavaria, who had his residence in this city. But he was not satisfied with mere personal attention and enjoyment. He desired that his visit might be one of usefulness. Accordingly he drew up theses, and proposed a public disputation on his favourite topics of law and grace. That he might excite the more attention and interest, he made his theses little other than a string of paradoxes. The following may be regarded as a specimen:

"The law of God is a salutary rule of life; yet it cannot help man in the obtaining of righteousness; but, on the contrary, impedes him."

"The works of man, let them be fair and good as they may, are yet nothing but mortal sins."

"The works of the righteous would be mortal sins, if from a holy reverence for God they did not fear that they might be mortal sins."

"The law saith, *Do this;* but what it enjoins is never done. Grace saith, *Believe in him;* and immediately all is perfected."

The discussion was held on the 26th of April, in presence of a numerous auditory. Attracted by the reputation of Luther, professors, courtiers, burghers, students came together in crowds to hear him. The theses were opposed, courteously yet earnestly, by five doctors of divinity. Luther, on his part, exhibited unusual mildness and patience; kindly listened to all the objections of his opponents; and by his explanations and arguments, was highly successful in removing them. The discussion evidently was productive of much good. Several young men, among whom was the celebrated Martin Bucer, afterwards a burning and shining light in the Reformation, were brought at this time to the knowledge of the truth. Indeed, a work was commenced at Heidelberg which did not stop until it had pervaded the city.

The object of his visit being accomplished, Luther prepared to return to Wittemberg. But he was not permitted to return on foot. His Augustinian brethren, proud of his fame, and regarding him as an ornament to their order, seemed to vie one with another in their endeavours to help him onwards to his home. He returned by the way of Erfurth and Eisleben—the former the place of his education, and the latter of his birth—and arrived at Wittemberg towards the end of May. His health and spirits were both improved by the journey, and he came back better prepared than ever for the severe labours and trials that awaited him.

CHAPTER V.

Luther's explanations on the subject of indulgences—His letter to Pope Leo X.—Luther summoned to Rome—The pope consents that he shall be tried before Cardinal Cajetan at Augsburg—Is secretly condemned at Rome, before the time for his trial—Luther sets out on foot for Augsburg—Arrives there—Interview with Serra Longa—Receives a safe-conduct from the emperor—First interview with Cajetan—Second interview—Third interview—Luther celebrates the Lord's supper with his friends—Appeals to the pope when better informed—Leaves Augsburg—Returns to Wittemberg.

In the summer of 1518, after his return from Heidelberg, Luther took up afresh his theses on indulgences. In his own judgment, some parts of them needed explaining and softening. They had excited needless opposition from being imperfectly understood. While on other points his feelings now constrained him to make advances, and to be more full and explicit than he had previously been. He published, therefore, what he called his "Solutions;" a work prepared with much care and moderation, but in which he courageously defended every proposition which truth obliged him to maintain. He insisted, as before, " that every Christian who truly repents of his sins receives forgiveness without any indulgence; that the pope has no more power than the lowest priest to do more than simply to declare the forgiveness which God has already granted; that the treasury of merits administered by the pope is a pure fiction; and that the Holy Scriptures are the sole rule of faith." He represents repentance as the putting on of " a new and heavenly spirit," and " not those outward penances which the haughtiest sinner may perform without any real humiliation." He describes the popes as men, like other men, who not only may err, but very often have erred and sinned egregiously. " On any other ground," says he, " might I not be required to say, that the horrible wars and massacres of Julius II. were the good deeds of a kind shepherd of the Lord's sheep?" At the same time he speaks honourably of Leo X., of whose true character he was yet comparatively ignorant. " We have a very good pope in Leo X. His sincerity and learning are matter of joy to us. But what can he do alone, amiable and gracious as he is? He ought assuredly to have been elected in better times. In these days we deserve none but such as Julius II. or Alexander VI."

At the same time that Luther published this work for the benefit of his countrymen, he sent copies of it, with courteous and submissive letters, to his ordinary, the Bishop of Brandenburg, and also to Leo X. In his letter to the pope he explains fully how he became involved in this dispute about indulgences, and why he feels constrained to continue it. "I call all Germany to witness," says he, "that nothing was heard in all the taverns but complaints of the avarice of the priests, and attacks on the power of the keys and of the supreme bishop." Such were the effects of the preaching of indulgences. "When I heard these things, my zeal was aroused for the glory of Christ; or (if another construction is to be put upon my conduct) my young and warm blood was inflamed. I represented the matter to certain princes of the church; but some laughed at me, and others turned a deaf ear. The awe of your name seemed to have made all motionless. Thereupon I published this dispute. "And now what am I to do? I cannot retract what I have said; and I see that this publication draws down upon me, from all sides, an inexpressible hatred. I have no wish to appear in the great world; for I am unlearned, of small wit, and far too inconsiderable for such great matters,—more especially in this illustrious age, when Cicero himself, if he were living, would be constrained to hide himself in some dark corner."

Luther has sometimes been accused of having broken the unity of the Western church, and of being involved in the sin of schism. But it is evident from the foregoing transactions, and from others which will follow, that he intended no schism. He wished, if possible, to avoid it. He saw the need of a reformation, but he wished it to proceed from the highest authority in the church. It was his adversaries, who opposed and blasphemed the truth, and would not admit the sufficiency of Christ's salvation, who were the authors of the schism. On them rests the responsibility of rending the Lord's vesture, at the foot of his cross.

But while Luther was endeavouring, if possible, to win the confidence of Rome, Rome had no other thoughts but those of vengeance against him. One of the cardinals had already written to the Elector of Saxony, exhorting him to withdraw his protection from Luther, and intimating that some suspicion would rest on himself, should he refuse. The Elector had always prided himself on his attachment to the religion of his fathers. Still, he loved and sought the truth; and he knew that this was not always found on the side of the strongest. He had arrived also at the conviction, that one might be a Christian prince, and not be a slave of the pope. He replied, therefore, to the cardinal, that it had ever been his desire to prove his submission to the universal church, and that he had never defended the writings and discourses of Dr. Martin Luther. "I hear, however," says he, "that Luther has uniformly expressed his willingness to appear, under a safe-conduct, before learned, Christian and impartial judges, to defend his doctrine, and to submit to their decision, if they should be able, by the Scriptures, to convict him of error." At the same time with this letter, or a little previous, the Emperor Maximilian also wrote to the pope, exhorting him to take measures against Luther, and pledging himself to enforce, throughout the empire, whatever his holiness should decree on the subject.

On the reception of these letters, the pope immediately instituted an ecclesiastical court at Rome, for the purpose of trying Luther; and appointed his great adversary, Prierias, to be both his accuser and his judge. The preliminaries were soon arranged; and Luther was summoned to appear, in person, before this bloody tribunal, within sixty days.

Luther was at Wittemberg, awaiting the good effects which he imagined his submissive letter to the pope was calculated to produce, when he received the summons to appear at Rome. "At the moment," says he, "that I looked for benediction, I saw the thunderbolt descend upon me. I was like the lamb that troubled the stream at which the wolf was drinking. Tetzel escaped, and I was to be devoured."

This summons threw all Wittemberg into consternation; because, whatever course Luther might take, his destruction seemed inevitable. If he obeyed the summons and went to Rome, he would assuredly become the victim of his enemies; and if he refused to obey the summons, he would, as usual, be condemned for contumacy, and the German princes would not protect him. His friends were excessively alarmed. "Shall the preacher of righteousness go and risk his life in that great city, already drunk with the blood of the saints and of the martyrs of Jesus? Shall every one who dares to lift his head in the midst of the enslaved nations of Christendom be, on that account, struck down? Shall this man be trampled under foot, who seemed formed to resist a power which nothing before had been able to withstand?"

On the 8th of August, Luther wrote to Spalatin, requesting that he would use his influence with the elector to have his cause tried in Germany. At the same time, the members of the University of Wittemberg addressed an intercessory letter to the pope himself. They declared it impossible for Luther, in his present state of health and circumstances, to appear at Rome; and humbly besought his holiness to allow him to be heard in some more convenient place.

This matter was arranged with less difficulty than might have been anticipated. The pope had already a legate in Germany, Cardinal De Vio, commonly called Cajetan, from the town of Gaëta, where he was born. He was a Dominican and a schoolman, and likely, on both these accounts, to regard Luther with any thing but impartiality. Still, he would be the more sure to execute the work expected of him, and fulfil the cruel designs of Rome. The cause of Luther was transferred from Rome to Augsburg, in Germany, and Cajetan was authorized to try and decide it. And yet there was properly to be no trial; for Luther had already been condemned as a heretic at Rome, and that, too, long before his sixty days of respite had expired. His summons to appear at Rome for trial within sixty days was dated the 7th of August; thus giving him till the 7th of October to make preparations and to accomplish the journey. But it soon appeared that, before the end of August, he had actually been tried at Rome by the Bishop of Asculan, and pronounced a heretic.

When this fact came to the knowledge of Luther, he could not repress his indignation. "Is this the style and manner of the Roman court," said he, "that in the same time that she summons and exhorts, she also accuses, judges, condemns and declares guilty; and this, too, in the case of one who is at such a distance from Rome, and who can have no knowledge of what is going on? What answer can they make to all this?"

The pope's brief to Cajetan, commissioning him to act in the case of Luther, was dated the 23d of August, and proceeds as follows: "We charge you to compel the aforesaid Luther to appear before you in person, and to prosecute and reduce him to submission without delay, he having been already declared a heretic, by our dear brother Jerome, Bishop of Asculan. For this purpose invoke the power and assistance of our very dear son in Christ, Maximilian, and the other princes of Germany, and of all the communities, universities and potentates, whether ecclesiastical or secular. And when you have secured his person, cause him to be detained in safe custody, that he may be brought before us." Thus we see that the pope was still intent on dragging Luther to Rome.

His holiness proceeds to instruct his legate to forgive and restore Luther, in case he retracts; but "if he persist in stubbornness, and you fail to get possession of his person, we give you power to proscribe him in all places in Germany; and to put away, curse and excommunicate all those who are attached to him; and to enjoin all Christians to shun his society." And as though this were not enough, the pope further directs his legate to "excommunicate all prelates, religious orders, universities, communities, counts, dukes and potentates (the emperor only excepted) who shall neglect to seize the said Martin Luther and his adherents, and send them to you under proper and safe custody." "As to the laity," continues his holiness, "if they do not, without any delay or demur, obey your orders, we declare them reprobate, unable to perform any lawful act, disentitled to Christian burial, and deprived of all possessions which they may hold, either from the apostolic see, or from any lord whatever."

Such, then, was the trial and the treatment that awaited Luther. The Romish despot had prepared every thing to crush him. He had set every engine at work, so that his ruin seemed inevitable.

And while the pope was thus arming the legate with his thunders, he was endeavouring, by soft and soothing speeches, to gain the concurrence of the Elector of Saxony, so that Luther might find no protection with him. He wrote the elector a most flattering letter, bearing the same date with that of his commission to Cajetan, with a view to cajole him, if possible, into his own designs against the life and liberty of the reformer.

The Elector of Saxony was at this time at Augsburg, where he had been attending a diet of the empire. Before leaving the city, he pledged himself to Cajetan, the pope's legate, that Luther should appear before him. He directed Spalatin also to write to Luther, informing him that he was not to be tried in Rome; that the pope had named a commission to hear him in Germany; and that he must prepare immediately to set out for Augsburg.

On receiving this notice, Luther resolved at once, and at all hazards, to obey. His friends, with one voice, endeavoured to dissuade him. They feared that a snare might be laid for him on his journey, or that some design was formed against his life. Some set about finding a place of concealment for him. His friend Staupitz urged him to retire from the world, and to come and reside with him in the convent of Salzburg. "Your most prudent course," says he, "is to leave Wittemberg, and come and stay with me. Here let us live and die together." Count Albert of Mansfeldt sent him a message, cautioning him against setting out, because some great nobles had bound themselves with an oath to seize him and then strangle or drown him. But nothing could shake the resolution of Luther. He would not go and hide himself under the wing of the Vicar-general Staupitz, in the convent of Salzburg. He preferred rather to continue on that stormy stage where the providence of God had placed him, and to meet whatever might befall him in the faithful discharge of duty. The information he had received from Count Mansfeldt induced him to ask of his prince a safe-conduct; but Frederic replied that this was not necessary, and only sent him some letters of introduction to distinguished individuals at Augsburg. He also forwarded him money for the journey ; and, thus equipped, Luther set forward, on foot, to place himself in the power of his adversaries.

He reached Weimar on the 28th of September, where the Elector of Saxony was then holding his court, and took lodgings in the convent of the Cordeliers. He was treated here with much civility, and invited to preach in presence of the court. His case excited a deep interest in the convent. On parting, one of the monks kindly said to him, " My brother, you will have to meet Italians at Augsburg. They are a shrewd people, subtle antagonists, and will give you enough to do. I fear you will not be able to defend your cause against them. They will cast you into the fire, and the flames will consume you." To which Luther only replied, " My dear friend, pray to our Lord God who is in heaven, and put up a pater noster for me, and for his own dear Son, whose cause is mine. If Christ's cause is maintained, mine is safe."

Luther continued his journey on foot, and arrived at Nuremburg, where he found several faithful friends. From one of these he borrowed a monk's frock, in which to appear before the legate, as his own was old and much the worse for his journey. Two of these friends, unwilling that their brother should encounter danger alone, resolved to accompany him to Augsburg. When they had arrived within a few miles of the town, Luther was seized with a violent sickness. He thought he should die. His two friends were much alarmed, and engaged for him a wagon, in which he entered Augsburg, October 7th, and took lodgings in the convent of the Augustinians. He here rapidly recovered, and was soon able to make preparation for the business on which he had come.

He sent one messenger to inform the legate of his arrival, and another to solicit an interview with his friend Staupitz, who, he had understood, was in the city.

The day following his arrival at Augsburg Luther received a visit from an Italian courtier, who was in the service of Cajetan, and whose name was Serra Longa. He came, as he said, of his own accord, out of pure friendship for Luther and a sincere love of the church. After the customary salutations and many professions, he entered on the object of his visit as follows: "I am come to offer you prudent and good advice. Make your peace with the church. Submit unreservedly to the cardinal. Retract your calumnies. Others have put forth heresies, but have been restored as soon as they retracted their errors." Luther intimated his intention of standing upon his own defence. But answered the Italian hastily, "Beware of that. Would you presume to enter the lists with the legate of his holiness?" Luther replied, "If they can prove to me that I have taught any thing contrary to the Romish church, I will be my own judge, and will immediately retract. But I must first ascertain whether the legate relies more on the authority of St. Thomas than the faith will sanction. If he does, I certainly shall not submit to him." Understanding from this that it was Luther's intention to have a discussion with the cardinal, the Italian began to show temper, and to use the most irritating and extravagant language. He soon recovered himself, however, and returned to his former gentleness, endeavouring to persuade the reformer to submit to the legate and humbly to retract his errors. Luther by this time understood the character of his visitant, and thought it necessary to speak with more reserve. He told Serra Longa that he was quite ready to be humble and obedient, and to give satisfaction in any point in which he might be shown to be in error. At these words the latter exclaimed exultingly, "I will go directly to the legate, and you will follow me presently. It will soon be settled, and all will be well."

During the absence of Longa, Luther was visited by several of the more reputable citizens of Augsburg, to whom he had brought letters of introduction from the Elector of Saxony. They all manifested the most lively interest in his welfare, and insisted that he should not go into the presence of the legate till they had obtained for him a safe-conduct from the emperor. "We must not trust these Italians," said they. "Whatever fair appearances the cardinal may put on, we know that he is in heart enraged against you, in the highest degree." They said so much on this point, that Luther consented to them, and agreed to wait for a safe-conduct; which, as the emperor was now hunting in the neighbourhood, could be obtained in a little time.

These gentlemen had scarcely left the convent, when Serra Longa returned. "Come," said he to Luther, "the cardinal is waiting for you. I will myself conduct you to him. But first let me tell you how you must appear in his presence. When you enter the room where he is sitting, you must prostrate yourself, with your face to the ground. When he tells you to rise, you must kneel before him; and you must not stand erect till he tells you to do so. Remember that it is before a prince of the church you are about to appear. As to the rest, fear nothing. All will soon be settled without any difficulty." Luther interrupted the volubility of the little man, by beginning to say something about a safe-conduct. "O!" said Serra Longa, "do not seek any thing of that sort. You have no need of it whatever. The legate is kindly disposed towards you, and quite ready to end the affair amicably. If you ask for a safe-conduct, you will spoil all." Luther told him, at length, that he had pledged himself to his friends not to venture without a safe-conduct, and that all his flatteries and entreaties would be vain; so that Longa was obliged to return to his employer, and report the failure of his mission, at the moment when he fancied it would be crowned with success. And thus ended the first day's adventures of the reformer at Augsburg.

The next day was Sunday, when his lodgings were crowded with visiters, intent upon seeing the great Doctor Luther. He was earnestly invited to preach, but he prudently declined the invitation. He was beset, also, by the emissaries of the cardinal. "The cardinal sends you assurances of his grace," said they. "Why are you afraid? He is so gracious, that he will be like a father to you." While they were proceeding in this strain, some one came up close behind him and whispered, "Do not believe a word that they say. There is no dependence to be placed upon them."

On the morning of the next day, Monday, Serra Longa appeared again. "Why do you not go to the cardinal?" said he, as soon as he entered. "He is expecting you, in the most indulgent frame of mind. With him, the whole question is summed up in six letters, Revoca, (*retract.*) Come then with me; you have nothing to fear." Luther thought within himself that these were six pretty important letters. He replied in brief, that he would appear as soon as he had received his safe-conduct. At these words Longa lost his temper again, and continued to prate for some little time. But finding Luther immovable, he left the house, leaped into his saddle and rode away.

Shortly after his departure Luther received his safe-conduct, and began immediately to prepare for his interview with the legate. The legate, on his part, expecting to meet the heretic the next day, called together his advisers, that they might consult as to the most proper method of treating him. One said, "We must compel him to retract." Another, "We must arrest him and throw him into prison." A third thought it might be better to put him silently out of the way. A fourth, that it would be expedient rather to win him over by gentleness and kindness. The cardinal seems to have inclined to make trial, in the first instance, of this last method.

At length the day of conference arrived, and Luther repaired to the palace of the legate, accompanied by several friends. On entering the room where the cardinal was, he found him waiting, attended by Serra Longa. The reception of Luther was cool, but civil. The formalities of introduction being over, the legate remained silent, expecting Luther to begin his recantation. Luther also continued silent, reverently waiting for the prince to address him. But finding that he did not open his lips, he at length introduced the subject as follows : " Most worthy father, upon the summons of his holiness, the pope, and at the desire of my gracious lord, the Elector of Saxony, I appear before you as an humble and obedient son of the holy Christian church. I acknowledge myself to be the author of the theses that are the subject of inquiry. I am ready to listen, with all submission, to the charges brought against me, and, if I am in error, to be instructed in the truth." The cardinal replied, " My dear son, you have filled all Germany with commotion, by your dispute concerning indulgences. I hear that you are a doctor well skilled in the Scriptures, and that you have many followers. If, therefore, you wish to be a member of the church, and to have the pope a most gracious lord, listen to me. Here are three articles which, acting under the direction of our most holy father, the pope, I am to propose to you: First, you must retract your errors, acknowledge your faults and return to your duty. Secondly, you must promise to abstain, for the future, from propagating your opinions. And thirdly, you must engage to be more discreet, and avoid every thing that may grieve or disturb the church."

Luther now requested to see the pope's brief, by which the cardinal was empowered to negotiate and settle the difficulty; a most reasonable request certainly, and one in strict accordance with all legal forms. But the legate answered, "Your demand, my son, cannot be complied with. You must acknowledge your errors, and be careful in future what you teach; and then, acting by the command and on the authority of our most holy father, the pope, I will adjust the whole affair." "Well, then," said Luther, "if I must acknowledge my errors, you will please to inform me what my errors are."

At this request the Italians present were astonished. They had expected to see the poor German fall down on his knees and beg for mercy. But the cardinal, thinking it hardly generous to crush a poor feeble monk by the weight of all his authority, and trusting to his own learning to give him an easy victory, condescended to tell Luther what he was accused of, and even to enter into some discussion with him. "My beloved son, there are two propositions contained in your works, which you must, above all, retract: First, the treasure of indulgences does not consist of the merits and sufferings of our Lord Jesus Christ. Secondly, the man who receives the holy sacrament must have faith in the grace offered to him, or he is not benefited."

These propositions were, indeed, fatal to the commerce of Rome, and no wonder the legate required that they should be retracted. For if, on purchasing the indulgence, men did not acquire any portion of Christ's merits, this paper currency lost its value, and was no better than a mere rag. And so also of the sacraments, which were continually bought and sold for money: if faith on the part of the recipient was necessary in order to their possessing any efficacy, their value in the estimation of the thoughtless multitude would be lost. For faith is not in the gift of the pope. It is beyond his power, and can come only from the Lord.

In showing the error of the above stated propositions, the legate had no recourse to the Scriptures, but quoted a constitution of Pope Clement VI., and various opinions from the scholastic divines. But Luther replied, "I cannot receive the constitutions of popes as sufficient proofs on subjects of so much importance. For they wrest the Holy Scriptures, and do not quote them to the purpose." To which the legate replied, "The pope has power and authority over all things;" an assertion which, of course, Luther was not willing to admit.

After considerable discussion, Luther at length said to the legate, "As to the matter of indulgences, if you can prove to me that I am mistaken, I am ready to receive instruction. We may leave that subject open without compromising our faith as Christians. But as to that other article concerning faith, if I yielded any thing there, I should be denying Christ. I cannot, therefore, yield that point, and I will not. God helping me, I will hold it unto the end." But said the cardinal in anger, "Whether you will, or will not, you must this very day retract that article, or else, for that alone, I will reject and condemn all your doctrine." To which Luther replied, "I have no will but the Lord's. He will do with me what seemeth good in his sight. But had I a hundred heads, I would rather lose them all, than retract the testimony I have borne to the holy Christian faith." The cardinal answered, "I am not come here to argue with you. You must retract, or prepare to endure the punishment you have deserved."

Luther, perceiving that no good could come of such a discussion, manifested a willingness to withdraw; which he did, after that the legate had offered, and he rejected, a proposition to remove the farther consideration of the subject from Augsburg to Rome.

On returning to the convent, Luther was rejoiced to meet there his old and tried Christian friend, Staupitz. He had just arrived in the city, hoping to be able to afford some assistance to Luther, in his trying and perilous circumstances. Luther related to him fully all that had passed; how he had found it impossible to get a satisfactory answer to his inquiries; and how he had been required to recant, without even an attempt to convict him of error. It was by the advice of Staupitz that Luther prepared to meet the legate, at the next interview, in writing.

The following day Luther repaired a second time to the legate's palace, accompanied by Staupitz and by other powerful friends. He had also the precaution to take a notary with him. After the customary salutations, Luther read, with a firm voice, the following written declaration: "I declare that I honour the holy Roman church, and that I will continue to do so. I have sought after truth, in my public disputations, and what I have taught I regard, to this hour, as true and Christian. Nevertheless, I am but a man, and may be mistaken. I am willing, therefore, to be instructed and corrected wherein I may have erred. I declare myself ready to answer, by word of mouth, or in writing, all charges and objections which the illustrious legate may bring against me. I declare myself willing to submit my theses to the decision of the four universities of Bâle, Fribourg, Louvain and Paris, and to retract whatever they shall declare to be erroneous. In a word, I am ready to do all that can be required of a Christian man. But I solemnly protest against the method that has been pursued in this affair, and against that strange assumption which would oblige me to retract, without having convicted me of error."

The legate was quite unprepared for such a protest, and strove to hide his confusion by affecting to laugh and putting on the semblance of mildness. "This paper," said he to Luther, "is quite unnecessary; I will not dispute with you, in public or in private. My wish is to settle the whole affair with paternal tenderness. I beseech you, therefore, my dear friend, to return to a sense of duty, acknowledge the truth, and behold me ready to reconcile you to the church and to the supreme bishop. *Retract*, my friend, *retract*. Such is the pope's will. You will find it hard to kick against the pricks."

To this Luther replied promptly, "*I cannot retract;* but I offer to answer you in writing. We had enough of contention yesterday." The cardinal was provoked at this expression, and immediately entered on a long and noisy harangue, with a view to crush and overwhelm his adversary, without giving him opportunity to reply. He sneered, he chided, he declaimed; he quoted from St. Thomas and Aristotle, and raved against all those who differed from them; he broke out in harsh invective against Luther; and jumbled together the most incongruous things. Again and again, Luther attempted to reply; but the legate interrupted him, and overwhelmed him with cries of "Recant! recant!" Staupitz interposed, and entreated the legate that Dr. Luther might be permitted to answer. But his highness resolved to have all the talk to himself. Unable to convince, and fearing to strike, he would at least stun by his violence.

Perceiving his object, and knowing that it would be vain to attempt to turn him from it, Luther renewed his request, that he might be permitted to send in his answer to the legate in writing. In this he was seconded by Staupitz, and by several others who were present. At length, the cardinal consented to this proposition, and the parties separated.

The two allegations which were to be answered in writing, were those before stated respecting indulgences and faith. Luther lost no time in preparing his answer, and was ready the next day to lay it before the cardinal. He insisted that the saints, so far from possessing a superabundance of merit, which went to constitute a treasury of indulgence, had really no merit on which to rest their own salvation. They must be saved by grace, or not at all. And as to the merits of Christ, these were not a treasure of indulgences, excusing us from good works, but a *treasure of grace quickening us to perform them.* Christ's merits were applied, too, not by the keys, or the pope's indulgences, but by the Holy Ghost alone. Luther went also into a full vindication of his doctrine respecting faith; and concluded by saying, "Deign then, worshipful father, to intercede on my behalf with our most holy lord, the pope, that he may not treat me with so much severity. My soul seeks the light of truth. I am not so proud that I should be ashamed to retract, if I had taught what is not agreeable to the truth. My greatest joy will be to see the triumph of that doctrine which is according to the mind of God. Only let me not be forced to do any thing that is against my conscience."

The legate affected to treat with great contempt the answer which Luther presented to him. After looking it over, he threw it down with a contemptuous gesture, as if unworthy of his regard; and then assuming his former tone, he commenced a long speech, in which he scolded and thundered without intermission, claiming the sole right to be heard.

This mode of proceeding at the former interview had been in some degree successful; but Luther was not a man to bear with it a second time. His indignation broke through all restraint, and raising his sonorous voice, he showed to the astonished bystanders that he had a right to be heard as well as the cardinal. He took up the principal argument of his opponent, in favour of indulgences, drawn from the constitution of Pope Clement VI., and showed that even this did not bear him out; it could not be proved from this, that "the treasure of indulgences is the merit of Christ." Pope Clement had said, that "Christ had acquired this treasure by his merits;" but certainly, the merit and the treasure were different things, even according to that authority on which the cardinal wholly relied. His highness endeavoured to escape from the snare into which he had fallen; but Luther held him with a strong hand. He endeavoured to change the subject in dispute; but Luther brought him back to it, and drew tighter on every side the fatal net, so that a retreat was absolutely impossible. "Most reverend father," said he, "your eminence must not suppose that we Germans are altogether ignorant of grammar. To *be* a treasure and to *acquire* a treasure are obviously two very different things."

The cardinal had no means of extricating himself, or covering his confusion, but by crying out, as he had often done before, "Retract! retract! If you do not retract, I will excommunicate you, and all your partisans, and send you to Rome, to be judged there. I have full power from the pope to do all this. And do you imagine that the pope has any fear of Germany? The pope's little finger is stronger than all the princes of Germany put together."

"Condescend," replied Luther, "to forward the written answer, which I have just given you, to Pope Leo X., with my most humble prayers." At these words the legate turned to Luther, and with a haughty and angry look, said, "Retract, or return no more." Luther made his obeisance and withdrew; and he and Cardinal Cajetan never met again. It has been supposed that this dispute had a powerful effect on the mind of the cardinal, and led to a very considerable modification of his own views on the important subject of justification.

Luther returned to his convent, happy in the consciousness that he had been enabled to stand his ground and do his duty. The dinner hour had scarcely passed, when the cardinal sent for Staupitz, and urged him to use his influence with Luther, to bring him to an open acknowledgment of his errors. "You must reason with him," said he, "and refute the arguments which he brings from the Scriptures." Staupitz candidly confessed that this was beyond his power. "Martin is more than a match for me, both in acuteness and in a knowledge of the Bible. Your grace would do well to resume the conference yourself, in respect to the controverted points." But the cardinal shook his head, and said, "I will argue no more with the beast. His eyes are too deeply set in his head, and his look is full of meaning." He, however, promised Staupitz that he would state to Luther, in writing, what it was that he wished him to retract; a promise which he never fulfilled.

Staupitz soon returned to Luther in the convent, where he was met by several other beloved Christian friends, who, at the instance of Luther, united in celebrating the holy supper of the Lord. The occasion was deeply and sublimely interesting. The bolt of excommunication was certainly levelled at the head of one of them, perhaps of more than one; and their very lives were in instant and imminent peril. They were about to separate, perhaps to meet no more in this world. The sacred supper, under these circumstances, in the cell of a convent, very closely resembled that primitive supper, in an upper chamber, when our Lord was about to be betrayed and crucified.

The cardinal continued to send kind messages to Luther, day after day, in the hope of softening him into some important retractions. Thinking it possible that in his discussions he might have used expressions that were harsh or disrespectful, Luther wrote the cardinal a letter, indicating his fears on this point, and asking his pardon, if he had needlessly offended him. He made no concessions, however, in respect to doctrines.

To this communication the cardinal returned no answer; but observed a studied and portentous silence in regard to Luther. No one was able to learn his intentions, or to fathom his designs. It was now that the friends of Luther became alarmed for his safety and urged him to depart. Every moment, they thought, was replete with danger, as the cardinal was, in all probability, meditating some dark design against his liberty, or his life. Staupitz and some others, who had accompanied the reformer to Augsburg, were already gone, and he was left in the midst of his enemies, comparatively alone. Besides, he could think of no good object to be answered by his remaining longer, and his duties imperiously called him away. In these circumstances, he drew up an earnest appeal from the pope *ill informed* respecting his case, to the pope when he shall be *better informed*. He wrote a letter, also, to the cardinal, to be delivered after his departure; and on the morning of the 18th of October, before day-break, under the conduct of a faithful guide, he left Augsburg. He rode on horseback, without a bridle, and without boots, spurs, or arms. When he had got fairly out of the city, and began to breathe the open air, and traverse the fields and villages of his native land, he could not help singing aloud, in the language of David, "Our soul is escaped, as a bird out of the snare of the fowler. The snare is broken, and we are delivered. Our help is in the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth."

Luther rode near fifty miles the first day. The remainder of the journey he travelled more leisurely, and arrived at Wittemberg, October 30. The latter part of his journey seemed almost like a triumph. He was returning without having given up any thing to Rome. Such a victory, gained by a poor mendicant friar over the proud representative of the pope, filled every heart with astonishment.

When the cardinal heard of Luther's departure, he was greatly vexed. He had been ambitious of the honour of healing the wounds of the church and of re-establishing the declining influence of the pope in Germany; but the heretic was gone, without his having so much as humbled him. He immediately wrote an angry letter to the Elector Frederic, demanding that Luther should be sent to Rome; or, at least, that he should be banished out of his territories. "Be assured," said he, "that this complicated, evil-intentioned and mischievous affair cannot be long protracted. As soon as I shall have informed our most holy lord the pope of all this malice, he will bring it to a speedy end."

CHAPTER VI.

Cajetan angry at Luther's departure—Luther on the point of being ordered away from Wittemberg—A new bull in favour of indulgences—Luther appeals to a general council—Cajetan blamed at Rome—Miltitz sent to negotiate with Luther—Miltitz enraged against Tetzel—Luther's first interview with Miltitz—Second interview, when a truce is agreed upon—Tetzel's disgrace and death—Luther's great popularity as a teacher—His works published at Basle—Miltitz embarrassed—The truce broken by Dr. Eck—Dispute at Leipzic between Eck and Carlstadt—Luther takes part in it—Important results of the dispute—Melancthon's history—Effect of the dispute on his mind—Luther's commentary on the Galatians.

It was while Luther was on his return from Augsburg, that he first got sight of the pope's brief, or commission to Cardinal Cajetan, empowering him to act in reference to his case. It was now that he learned, for the first time, that he had already been adjudged a heretic, at Rome. The knowledge of this fact, not only filled him with indignation, at the palpable unfairness with which he had been treated, but also perplexed him as to his duties and prospects. For being condemned as a heretic at Rome, he could scarcely hope to be permitted to continue in his professorship at Wittemberg, or to find an asylum in a convent, or to dwell anywhere in peace and safety. The protection of the elector might, perhaps, avail him; but he was far from being sure of that. However, it seemed to him clear that he ought to return to Wittemberg, and there wait to see what the eternal and merciful God would do with him. Meanwhile, he busied himself in publishing an account of his conference with the legate. Whatever might come in future, he resolved that this should remain, as a memorial of the struggle between himself and Rome.

We have already spoken of the legate's angry letter to the elector. After a suitable time, the elector replied, expressing strong disapprobation of the manner in which Luther had been treated at Augsburg, and declining either to send him to Rome, or, for the present, at least, to drive him from his territories. This decision of the elector was a great comfort to Luther, as it afforded him, if no more, a little respite; and it was by such respites that the Reformation, in the earlier stages of it, was carried forward.

Luther seems to have had a presentiment, however, that he should not be permitted to remain at Wittemberg, and he seriously thought, at one time, of a voluntary removal. The freedom enjoyed by the doctors of the University of Paris appeared to him desirable, and he half resolved to attach himself to their number. The elector also, on one occasion, expressly signified to Luther that he wished him to depart; but before he could get ready for a removal, the decision was revoked, and he was permitted and even requested to remain. Upon such seemingly slight contingencies did the fate of the Reformation seem often to be suspended. Had Luther gone to Paris, or retired from Wittemberg in any direction, it is impossible to conjecture what the state of Germany and of Europe might now have been.

As the constitution of Clement VI. had been found not sufficiently explicit in support of indulgences, Pope Leo X. caused a new bull to be published, in which he confirmed the doctrine of indulgences, in precisely those points which had been called in question. As

Luther had always declared his willingness to submit to the decision of the Romish church, he must now, thought the pope, either keep his word, or show himself to be a disturber of the peace and a despiser of the apostolic see. In either case, it was thought that the pope must be a gainer. But Luther was ready for this turn of affairs. On the 28th of November, 1518, he publicly appealed from the judgment of the pope to that of a general council of the church. "Seeing that the pope," says he, "like any other man, may fall into error, commit sin and other falsehood, and that the appeal to a general council is the only safeguard against acts of injustice, which it is impossible to resist,—on these grounds I find myself obliged to have recourse to it."

But this step of Luther, though one of seeming necessity, was also one of exceeding peril. It was a fresh attack upon the papal authority. A bull of Pope Pius II. had pronounced the greater excommunication against any one, not excepting the emperor himself, who should presume to appeal to a general council. Luther had every reason to suppose, therefore, that his appeal would only hasten his excommunication, and his consequent banishment from the German States. But while every thing seemed to portend and threaten such an event, suddenly the policy of Rome is changed. Instead of anathemas and destruction, she is resolved to make one more attempt at negotiation.

The ill success of Cajetan had occasioned much dissatisfaction at Rome; and the blame of the failure fell in no small measure upon him. He had been deficient, it was thought, in prudence and address; he had not sufficiently relaxed the strictness of his scholastic theology, on so important an occasion; his awkwardness and pedantry had spoiled all. Why did he provoke Luther by threats and insults, instead of alluring him by the promise of a bishopric, or even, if necessary, of a cardinal's hat?

Under the influence of such impressions at Rome, it was determined to send another envoy into Germany, and see if a second effort at negotiation might not be more successful. The person selected for this important service was Charles Miltitz, a Saxon by birth, but who had long resided at Rome, and was now in office as chamberlain to the pope. He was a vain man, who pretended to some family connexion with the princes of his native country, so that the courtiers at Rome sometimes called him the Duke of Saxony. In Italy he boasted of his German nobility; while in Germany he affected awkwardly the manners and refinement of Italy. He was given to wine, and this vice had increased upon him during his residence at Rome. Nevertheless, the pope and his cardinals placed great reliance on him. His insinuating manners, his German extraction, his skill in negotiation, altogether persuaded them that he might, by his prudence, arrest the progress of that revolution which now threatened the world.

The real object of his mission into Germany was in a measure concealed. The ostensible object was, that he might present the consecrated *golden rose* to the Elector Frederic. This rose, which was deemed to represent the body of Christ, was consecrated every year by the sovereign pontiff, and presented to one of the leading princes of Europe. The Elector of Saxony had petitioned for it, several years before: and it was determined, at the present critical juncture, to present it to him. By means of this bauble, it was expected that Frederic and his counsellors might be gained, and that, through them, the great adversary of Rome might be placed within her power.

The new legate arrived in Germany in the month of December, 1518. The mere report of his arrival spread suspicion and distrust in the elector's court and throughout Saxony. From all quarters Luther was advised to be on his guard against the stratagems of Miltitz.

On his arrival in Saxony, Miltitz first made a visit to his former friend, Spalatin; but scarcely had he begun to open his charges against Luther, when the chaplain broke out in complaints against Tetzel. He acquainted the legate with the falsehoods and blasphemies of this old vender of indulgences, and declared that all Germany ascribed to his audacious proceedings the dissensions that now distracted the church. Miltitz affected great astonishment. Instead of being the accuser, he found himself in the place of one accused. His wrath was instantly turned against Tetzel, and he summoned him to appear before him at Altenburg, to account for his conduct.

This blustering Dominican had ceased, for some time, to preach or sell indulgences, and was now living in retirement in a college at Leipsic. He turned pale with fear, on the receipt of Miltitz's letter. He foresaw that Rome herself was about to abandon him; and where should he flee? He excused himself from obeying the summons, on the ground that Luther had excited such a prejudice against him, that he could not with safety appear abroad anywhere. A striking contrast between the Christian boldness of one of these men and the contemptible cowardice of the other!

Miltitz earnestly desired to have a private interview with Luther, and Spalatin kindly offered his house for the purpose. They met near the 1st of January, 1519. "Dear Martin," said the legate, as soon as Luther came into his presence, "I thought you were an old theologian, who, quietly seated at his fireside, had certain fixed theological crotchets; but I see you are yet young, and in the prime of life. Do you know that you have drawn away all the world from the pope? Assuredly, if I had an army of twenty-five thousand men, I would not undertake to kidnap you and carry you to Rome."*

Thinking that, by these flatteries, he had in some measure prepared the mind of Luther, the legate continued: "Now be persuaded yourself to stanch the wound you have inflicted on the church, and which none but yourself can heal. Beware, I beseech you, of raising and continuing a storm, in which the best interests of mankind must be wrecked." He insinuated something about a retractation; but immediately softened the objectionable word into expressions of high esteem for Luther, and of the intensest indignation against Tetzel.

In reply, Luther enumerated some of the just complaints of Christians, and spoke of the unworthy manner in which, notwithstanding the uprightness of his intentions, he had himself been treated by the court of Rome. "Nevertheless," added he, "I offer, from this time forth, to keep silence on these subjects, and to let the matter die away, provided my enemies also are reduced to silence: but if they continue their attacks, we shall very soon see a partial dispute give rise to a serious struggle. I have my weapons ready prepared. —I will even go further," said he, after a moment's pause; "I will write to his holiness, acknowledging that I may have been too violent in my language; and declare, that it is as a faithful son of the church that I have opposed a style of preaching which drew upon it the mockeries and insults of the people. I even consent to put forth a writing, in which I will desire all who shall read my works not to see in them any attack on the church of Rome; and in which I will beseech my readers to continue in submission to its authority. Yes, I am willing to do every thing and bear every thing; but as to a retractation of my doctrines, it is out of the question." After a few words more of desultory conversation, the first interview between the reformer and the nuncio terminated.

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* The wretch had, at this moment, in his pocket all the requisite briefs and other apparatus for carrying Luther to Rome, if he could only get him in his power.

They met again; at which meeting a truce was signed, of which Luther immediately gave information to the elector, as follows: "Most serene prince and gracious lord, I hasten to inform your electoral highness, that Charles Miltitz and myself are at last agreed, and have terminated our differences by the following articles. 1. Both sides are forbidden to write or act, henceforward, in the question that has been raised. 2. Miltitz will, without delay, communicate to his holiness the state of affairs. His holiness will commission an enlightened bishop to inquire into the matter, and point out the errors which I am to retract. If proof is afforded me that I am in error, I will retract, and never more do any thing that can lessen the honour and authority of the holy Roman church."

When the agreement had been effected, the joy of Miltitz was uncontrollable. At one moment he exulted, and then he wept. "For a century," said he, "no question has caused so much anxiety to the cardinals and court of Rome. They would have given ten thousand ducats, rather than see it prolonged."

Luther was not much moved by the tears of the legate. He spoke of them afterwards as "crocodile tears." Still, he manifested (what he truly felt) a degree of satisfaction. Miltitz invited him to supper; and he accepted the invitation. When the repast was over, Miltitz opened his arms to the heretical doctor, and saluted him with a kiss. "A Judas's kiss," thought Luther at the time. However, he manifested no suspicions.

Miltitz repaired immediately to Leipsic, where Tetzel was, and summoned the culprit into his presence. He overwhelmed him with reproaches, accusing him of being the cause of all the difficulty, and threatening him with the pope's intensest anger. He charged upon him not merely the blasphemous expressions with which he had urged the sale of indulgences, but the sin of appropriating to his own purposes a part of the money which he had received. The miserable wretch whom, in the day of his triumph, nothing could abash, was struck motionless by these well-founded charges. He shrunk despairingly, and would gladly have buried himself in the bowels of the earth. Luther seems to have been almost the only person in the world who pitied him. He actually sat down and wrote him a letter of sympathy and of consolation. But it came too late. Haunted by the remorse of conscience, alarmed by the reproaches of those whom he had thought his friends, and dreading the anger of the pope, the health of Tetzel speedily failed, and he died miserably. It was generally believed that grief and despair hastened his end.

While these things were passing at Leipsic, Luther was busily engaged in his private studies. He was studying the decretals of the pontiffs, and other portions of the history of the papacy. And he began to discover—what he clearly understood at a later period—that the papacy is Antichrist. "I know not," wrote he to Spalatin, "whether the pope is Antichrist himself, or whether he is his apostle; so misrepresented and even crucified does Christ appear in these decretals of the pontiffs which I am reading." Still, he venerated the ancient church of Rome, and had no design or thought of separating from it. "That the Roman church," said he, "is more honoured of God than all other churches, is not to be doubted. St. Peter, St. Paul, forty-six popes and some hundreds of thousands of martyrs have laid down their lives in its communion, having overcome hell and the world; so that the eyes of God rest on the Roman church with special favour. Though at the present time every thing there is in a wretched state, this is no ground for separating from it. On the contrary, the more evils prevail there, the closer should we cling to it; since it is not by separation that we can cure these evils." We commend this whole letter to the consideration of those who think that Luther needlessly broke the unity of the church and sundered the bond of her communion. It was not Luther that separated himself from Rome, but Rome that separated herself from Luther.

While Luther was diligently pursuing his studies and performing his professional duties at Wittemberg, his fame and his usefulness were more widely extended. The number of his students constantly increased, and among them were found the most distinguished youth of Germany. "Our city," wrote Luther, "can scarce hold the numbers that are arriving." On another occasion he writes, "The students increase upon us like an overflowing tide."

It was at this period, too, that Frobenius, a celebrated printer of Basle, collected the writings of Luther together, and published them in one uniform edition. They circulated rapidly, not only in Switzerland and Germany, but in most other countries of Europe. The publisher sent six hundred copies into France and Spain. They were sold publicly at Paris, and read with approbation by some of the doctors of the Sorbonne. In England they were received with still greater eagerness. Some Spanish merchants translated them into Spanish, and forwarded them from Antwerp to their own country. A learned bookseller of Pavia took a large number of copies to Italy, and circulated them in the transalpine cities. Frobenius, the publisher, in forwarding a copy to Luther, remarks, "I have sold the whole edition, except ten copies; and no speculation ever answered my purpose so well as this."

"Such," says a learned historian, "was the commencement of the awakening in the several countries of Europe. If we except Switzerland, where the preaching of the gospel had been already heard, the arrival of Luther's writings everywhere forms the first page in the history of the Reformation. A printer of Basle scattered the first germs of truth. At the moment when the Roman pontiff thought to stifle the work in Germany, it began to appear in France, in the Low Countries, in Italy, Spain, England and Switzerland; so that, should the power of Rome succeed in felling the parent stem, the seeds are now scattered abroad in all lands."*

But it is time that we return to Miltitz. The object of his embassy, sufficiently delicate and difficult at any time, became the more so at this time, on account of several unanticipated changes in providence. The first of these was the death of the Emperor Maximilian, which occurred shortly after the arrival of the legate in Germany. In consequence of this event, the Elector Frederic became, for the time, the administrator of the empire; and, as such, had little to fear from the frowns or the flatteries of any legate. Then new interests were set to work in the Romish court, which compelled it to temporize in its negotiations with Frederic. The pope and his minions had enough to do, in their intrigues respecting a successor in the empire, without troubling themselves deeply with the affairs of Luther. At the same time political troubles broke out in different parts of the empire, in consequence of the emperor's demise. Several of the princes undertook to avenge private quarrels, and invaded one another's dominions. While these things were in agitation, it was difficult to adjust satisfactorily a theological controversy.

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* D'Aubigné, vol. ii. p. 21.

Perceiving the difficulty of his situation, Miltitz, in conjunction with Cajetan, who was still in Germany, contrived a plan to get the person of Luther into their power, and to despatch him privately to Rome. The two legates had taken up their residence, for the time, at Treves. As Luther had agreed, in writing, to submit his cause to the arbitration of some learned bishop, and had privately intimated that the Archbishop of Treves would not be unacceptable to him, they persuaded the archbishop to summon the heretical doctor into his presence; intending, undoubtedly, as soon as he had passed out of the dominions of Frederic, to place him in a situation where he would not escape. But Luther was not slow to comprehend the artifice. "Everywhere, on all sides," said he, "my life is hunted." He excused himself to Miltitz for not obeying the summons; and the archbishop, who was a prudent and moderate man, did not press it. It was agreed to defer the examination till the ensuing diet of the empire; which diet did not assemble during the next two years.

But another event occurred still more discouraging to Miltitz than any which had preceded. The mutual silence agreed upon had been broken; and that not by Luther, but by one of the popish doctors. We have already heard of Eck, the celebrated professor at Ingolstadt, and author of "the Obelisks." One of Luther's colleagues at Wittemberg (commonly known by the name of Carlstadt*) had written against "the Obelisks;" to whom Eck had replied; and several papers had passed between them. Eck now challenged Carlstadt to a public dispute; and the theses which he set forth as the ground of the discussion were so framed as to bear directly on the doctrines of Luther. Thus Luther had the mortification of seeing a disputation pending between the Goliath of Ingolstadt and another person, while he himself was to be the real object of attack. "That man," said he, "declares Carlstadt to be his antagonist, and at the same moment attacks me. But God reigns. He knows what, at length, is to come out of this tragedy."

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* His real name was Andrew Bodenstein. He was called Carlstadt from the place of his birth.

The dispute was appointed to take place at Leipzic, under the protection and patronage of Duke George of Saxony. Luther published a series of propositions in reply to those of Eck, and earnestly sought permission of Duke George that he might come to Leipzic, and take part in the approaching discussion; but the duke refused to give his consent. He was willing that Eck and Carlstadt should dispute, but he feared the power and the influence of Luther.

It was towards the end of June, 1519, that the parties came together at Leipzic. Dr. Eck, with his attendants, was first on the ground; but a large party from Wittemberg, preachers, professors, citizens and students, among whom was Luther, who had obtained permission to be there as a spectator, arrived shortly afterwards. As soon as Eck heard of the arrival of Luther, he came directly to his lodgings.

"What is this?" said he; "I am told you object to disputing with me." "How can I dispute," replied Luther, "when the duke positively forbids me to do so?" "If I am not allowed to dispute with you," answered Eck, "I shall take very little interest in discussing with Carlstadt. It is on your account that I am here. If I obtain the duke's permission, will you take the field?" Luther readily answered that he would. "Only obtain permission," said he, "and I will gladly meet you."

Eck instantly waited on the duke, and urged the matter with so much importunity, that his request was granted. The duke had a large apartment in his palace, called the Pleissenberg, where he intended the discussion should take place. Two elevated pulpits were erected opposite each other; tables were placed in front for the notaries; and benches were ranged around for the audience. In front of the pulpit intended for the doctors of Wittemberg, was suspended the portrait of St. Martin. In front of the other was the picture of St. George. "We shall see," said the haughty Eck, as he contemplated these emblems, "if I do not trample my antagonist under my feet."

The 27th of June was the day fixed upon for the opening of the discussion. The morning of the day was occupied with religious services, so that the dispute did not actually commence till the afternoon. From this time it continued, with little interruption, for no less than twenty days. During the first week, the dispute was carried on between Eck and Carlstadt, and related entirely to the subjects of free will and grace; the latter maintaining the opinions of Augustine on these points, and the former those of Cassian and the Semi-Pelagians.

It was on the 4th of July, that the contest commenced between Eck and Luther. The subject of it was of the deepest interest—the *supremacy of the pope;* and every thing announced that the discussion would be of a much more decisive character than that which had just terminated. Luther at this time accorded to the pope a kind of conventional supremacy, at least in those churches which acknowledged him as their head; but denied that he held this supremacy by a divine right; that it had any foundation in the Scriptures, or in the early fathers of the church. And this he found it very easy to demonstrate; so that there was little left to his antagonist but to shuffle and ridicule, to raise the cry of heresy, and practise his various scholastic arts. "The reverend father," said Eck, "has entered on this discussion, after well preparing his subject. Your excellencies will excuse me, if I should not produce so much exact research. I came here to discuss and not to make a book."

The debate on the pope's supremacy lasted five days; after which were discussed the subjects of purgatory, indulgences, penance, absolution, &c. "The indulgences," said Luther, "fell with scarce the shadow of defence. It was no better than play, a mere joke. Eck did not dare to defend them; he agreed with me in almost every thing." Speaking of the manner in which his opponent had conducted the discussion, Luther says, "He runs over Scripture almost without touching it, as a spider runs upon the water. He flees before it, as the devil flees from before the cross."

These theological discussions, which in our times could hardly be expected to excite much interest, had now been listened to with the deepest attention for twenty days, not only by ecclesiastics and students, but by laymen, burghers, knights and princes. The Dukes of Pomerania and of Saxony were in constant attendance. Only one exception was to be made to the general interest. Some of the Leipsic divines, the friends of Dr. Eck, are said to have slept so soundly, the greater part of the time, that it was hard to awake them even at the hour of dinner.

In his private letters, Eck acknowledged that he had been defeated on many points; but in public he boasted loudly of his victory. It was not agreed, however, between him and his party, to whom the victory belonged. "If *we* had not come in aid of Eck," said his Leipsic allies, "the illustrious doctor would have been overthrown." "The divines of Leipsic," said Eck, "are a well-meaning people; but I had formed too high expectations of them. I did all myself." "All I can say to throw light on this question," adds Luther, "is, that Dr. Eck clamoured continually, and the men of Leipsic kept continual silence."

The following opinion as to the result of the discussion is expressed by Mosellanus, one of the Leipsic professors, and an impartial eye-witness of all that took place. "Eck has obtained the victory, in the opinion of those who do not understand the question, and who have grown gray in scholastic studies. But Luther and Carlstadt remain masters of the field, in the judgment of those who have learning, intelligence and modesty."*

Some of the results of this discussion were of more value than mere popular applause. Several individuals were brought hopefully to the knowledge of the truth. Among these, was Poliander, private secretary to Dr. Eck, and John Cellarius, Professor of Hebrew at Leipsic. He shortly after gave up his place, and, full of humility, came to Wittemberg, to study at the feet of Luther. George, Prince of Anhalt, a mere youth, was present at these discussions, and received impressions which he never lost. He became afterwards a powerful and consistent friend of the Reformation. But the noblest result of the disputation at Leipsic remains still to be mentioned. It was here that the great Melancthon, the theologian of the Reformation, and the most intimate and powerful friend of Luther, received his call and anointing to the work.

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* Seckendorf, p. 207.

Melancthon, as I have remarked already, was the nephew of Reuchlin. He was born at Bretten, a small town in the palatinate, in the year 1497. To a powerful genius, he united great sweetness and gentleness of disposition. He outstripped all his early competitors in learning, and was prepared to enter the University of Heidelberg when only twelve years of age. At the age of sixteen, his uncle Reuchlin invited him to Tubingen, where many eminent scholars were assembled. He attended the lecture of the theologians, the physicians, and the jurisconsults. He deemed no kind of knowledge unworthy of his pursuit, but was specially engaged, even at this early period, in the study of the Scriptures. Rejecting the profitless speculations of the schoolmen, he thirsted for the plain word of God. When only seventeen years of age, he was made doctor of philosophy, and began to deliver lectures in public. He sided with his venerable uncle in his contests with the monks, and was favoured with the acquaintance and particular friendship of Erasmus. In a letter written at this time, Erasmus says, "I have the highest opinion and the most brilliant expectations of Melancthon. May the Lord so order events, that he may long survive us. He will altogether eclipse Erasmus."

At the age of twenty-one, he was appointed to the professorship of Greek at Wittemberg. The impression which he made, on his first arrival at Wittemberg, was not of the most favourable kind. He was of small stature, a shy and timid demeanour, and appeared more youthful than he really was. "Is this the man," thought the members of the university, "whom the great ones of our age, such as Reuchlin and Erasmus, so highly extol?" Even Luther himself, when first introduced to him, could hardly conceal his disappointment. But when, four days after his arrival, the young professor delivered his inaugural discourse, he spoke such elegant Latin, and manifested so much learning, so cultivated an understanding, and such sound judgment, that all his auditors were astonished. Among those who crowded around him to offer their congratulations, no one felt more delighted than Luther. He hastened to communicate to his friends the sentiments of his heart. Writing to Spalatin, he said, "The oration of Melancthon was so learned and beautiful, that it was heard by all with approbation and astonishment. We soon got over the prejudices we had conceived from his first appearance, and unitedly extol and admire his eloquence. We thank the prince and yourself for the service you have done us. I can wish for no better Greek professor."

From this period Luther and Melancthon were very special and devoted friends. They were almost always together, and were the more necessary to each other on account of the great difference in their natural constitutional temperaments and dispositions. "Melancthon was as remarkable for his prudence and gentleness, as Luther was for his impetuosity and energy. Luther communicated vigour to Melancthon; Melancthon moderated Luther. They were," says one, "like positive and negative agents in electricity, by whose reciprocal action an equilibrium is maintained." In this light the two friends seem to have regarded each other. "I," says Luther, "was born for struggling on the field of battle with parties and devils. Thus it is that my writings breathe war and tempest. I must root up stock and stem, clear away thorns and brambles, and fill up swamps and sloughs. I am like the sturdy wood-cutter, who must clear and level the road. But our master Philip (Melancthon) goes forward quietly and gently, cultivating and planting, sowing and watering, according as God has dealt to him so liberally of his gifts."

Melancthon had accompanied Luther to the disputation at Leipsic. He was there chiefly as a spectator and listener; but he was a most deeply interested listener. Hitherto he had applied himself almost exclusively to literature. These discussions imparted to him a new impulse, and launched him, at once, into the deeps of theology. From that hour he bowed the heights of his learning before the teachings of the divine word, and received the evangelical doctrine with the simplicity of a little child. From that hour, the two friends found themselves united in sympathies and labours, in a manner and to a degree unknown before.

The discussions at Leipsic had a powerful influence, not only on those who listened to them, but on the disputants themselves. The inquiries into which Luther was driven discovered to him, more clearly than before, the rottenness of the whole papal system. Searching, as he was now compelled to do, into the annals of the church, he found that the boasted supremacy of Rome had no other foundation than the ambition of one party and the credulous ignorance of another. "For seven years previous," says he, "I had read and expounded the Scriptures with so much zeal, that I knew them almost all by heart. I had also the first fruits of the knowledge and faith of our Lord Jesus Christ; and I openly maintained that it is not by divine right that the pope is chief of the Christian church. And yet, I could not see the conclusion from all this, namely, that of necessity, and beyond doubt, the pope is of the devil. For what is not of God must needs be of the devil. So hard it is to unlearn errors, which the whole world confirms by its example, and which, by long use, have become to us as a second nature."

The principal influence of the discussion upon Dr. Eck was, to irritate and inflame him. While he boasted of victory, he evidently felt the sting and the malice of conscious defeat. He exerted what influence he could to induce the elector to banish the reformers from his dominions. "Let us exterminate these vermin," said he, "before they have multiplied beyond all bounds." He published a tract in opposition to Melancthon, to which the learned professor replied with the most exquisite urbanity and skill. This was the first of Melancthon's theological writings. Finding that the more he exerted himself in Germany, the more obnoxious he became to his countrymen, Eck formed the resolution of crossing the Alps; that he might effect the destruction of those, by the power of Rome, whom he could not overcome by discussion and argument.

It was at this time that Luther published the first edition of his Commentary on the Galatians. This was greatly surpassed by the subsequent editions; but even in this he set forth with much power the doctrine of justification by faith, and vindicated the doctrine with equal power against the imputation of being unfavourable to love and good works. "If thou lovest him who hath made thee a present of twenty florins, or rendered thee any service, or testified in any other way his affection towards thee, how much more shouldst thou love him who hath given for thee, not gold or silver, but himself; who hath received for thee so many wounds; who hath undergone for thy sake an agony and sweat of blood; who, in thy stead, hath suffered death; who, in discharge of thy sins, hath swallowed up death, and procured for thee a Father in heaven full of love! If thou dost not love him, thy heart hath not yet entered into or understood the things which he hath done. Thou hast not believed them; for faith worketh by love."

The sacrament of the Lord's supper began now to occupy the thoughts of Luther. He preached on the subject, and published his discourse, in which he advocated the administration of the ordinance in both kinds, and insisted that without faith in the heart of him who received it, the mere partaking of the supper could be of no benefit. This was touching the priests of Rome in a tender point; and (as might have been expected) the discourse roused up afresh the cry of heresy. "He is a Hussite! a Wickliffite! a reviver of the odious doctrine of Prague!" Some would even have it that he was born in Bohemia, and of Bohemian parents. This report became so current, especially among his enemies at Dresden and Leipsic, that Luther thought proper to publish a tract, giving an account of his origin and pedigree. "I was born at Eisleben," said he, "and was baptized in the church of St. Peter. I was never in my life any nearer to Bohemia than Dresden."

Thus, while Luther was gradually advancing in knowledge, and assailing, one after another, the corruptions of Rome, he was preparing the way for that stroke of excision which (as we shall see) was soon to fall upon him, and separate him from this idolatrous church forever.

CHAPTER VII.

Charles V. chosen Emperor of Germany—Luther writes to him—Luther's works condemned by the universities of Cologne and Louvain—Luther on good works—His appeal to the German nation—Discourse on the mass—On the "Babylonian Captivity of the Church"—Melancthon's marriage—Eck goes to Rome and procures a bull of excommunication against Luther—Miltitz still anxious to effect a reconciliation—Persuades Luther to write to the pope—His letter and tract on Christian liberty—The excommunication disregarded in Germany—Luther's reply to the bull—He renews his appeal to a general council—He burns the pope's bull, with the decretals, the canon law, &c.

The year following the death of the Emperor Maximilian, the electors of Germany assembled at Frankfort, to choose a successor. The occasion was one of high interest and importance to all Europe. The principal candidates for the imperial crown were Charles V., grandson of the late emperor, who already governed the Netherlands, Spain, Sicily, Naples and Austria, and Francis I., King of France. Passing by both these, the electors first laid the crown at the feet of one of their own number, the friend of Luther, the Elector of Saxony. But he, through perhaps an excess of prudence, thought proper to decline it. "There is need," said he, "in present circumstances, of an emperor more powerful than myself, to save Germany. The Turk is at our gates. The King of the Netherlands and Spain, whose hereditary possessions in Austria border on the menaced frontier, is its natural defender."

It was chiefly in consequence of the recommendation of Frederic that Charles V. obtained the crown. The Spanish envoys offered the elector 30,000 gold florins, in token of their master's gratitude; but he promptly rejected the gift, and prohibited his ministers from accepting any present. The coronation of Charles, as Emperor of Germany, took place on the 22d of October, 1520.

Before the coronation, Luther took the precaution to write to Charles an humble and submissive letter. "If," said he, "the cause I defend is worthy of appearing before the throne of the Majesty of heaven, it surely is not unworthy of engaging the attention of a prince of this world. O, Charles! thou prince among the kings of the earth! I throw myself, as a suppliant, at the feet of your most serene majesty, and conjure you to deign to receive under the shadow of your wings, not me, but the cause of that eternal truth, for the defence of which God has intrusted you with the sword." To this most respectful letter, the young monarch returned no answer. He threw it aside, probably, as beneath his notice.

While Luther was in vain supplicating the favour of the new emperor, the storm seemed to thicken around him in Germany. Hochstraten, a Dominican and inquisitor of Cologne, between whom and Luther there had been already more than one encounter, extracted certain theses from his writings, which he persuaded the universities of Cologne and Louvain to condemn as heretical. This produced much excitement, at the time, in Germany, and led to some attempts upon the reformer's life. The elector, also, received repeated letters from Rome—some of them of the most urgent character—requesting him to withhold his protection from Luther, and give him over to the power of his enemies.

But while many were seeking the life of the reformer, others were raised up and prepared to defend him. The elector, though cautiously forbearing to commit himself fully to the cause of the Reformation, yet resolutely refused to abandon Luther. Several powerful German knights also wrote to Luther, of their own accord, inviting him to repair to their castles, and take refuge under their arms. It is interesting to see how different were their views, as to the means of defending and promoting the gospel, from those which actuated the reformer. "We want," said one of them, writing to Luther—"we want swords, bows, javelins and bombs, in order to repel the fury of the devil." But Luther replied, "I will not resort to arms and bloodshed, for the defence of the gospel. It is by the preaching of the word that the world has been conquered. By the word the church has been saved; by the word, also, it will be restored."

Relying thus confidently upon the power of the divine word, Luther laboured incessantly, in the midst of all his perils, to diffuse it. He published, at this time, his discourse on good works, which he dedicated to Duke John, the elector's brother. Of all his works, Luther seems to have regarded this as the best; because that in it he opens, most powerfully, the great doctrine of justification by faith. "No one," says Melancthon, "among all the Greek and Latin writers, has come nearer to the spirit of St. Paul than Luther in this discourse."

In June of this year, 1520, Luther published another work of great power and boldness, and which produced much effect. It was entitled, "An Appeal to his Imperial Majesty and the Christian Nobility of the German Nation, concerning the Reformation of Christianity." In his introduction, the reformer says, "It is not rashly and without consideration, that I, a man of the common people, take upon myself to address your highnesses. The misery and oppression which, at this hour, weigh down all Christian states, and more especially Germany, wring from me a cry of distress. I find myself compelled to call for help. I must see if God will not give his Spirit to some one or other of our countrymen, and thus stretch forth his hand to save our wretched nation. God has placed over us a young and generous monarch, and thus filled our hearts with high hopes. But we ourselves must, on our part, do all that it is possible for us to do."

"The Romanists," continued Luther, "have raised three barriers against all attempts at reformation. When the temporal power has attacked them, they have denied its authority, and asserted that the spiritual power was above it. When any one has rebuked them out of the Scripture, they have replied that none but the pope was able to interpret Scripture. When they have been threatened with a council, the reply has been, that no one but the sovereign pontiff has authority to convoke a council. They have thus wrested from our hands the three rods destined to correct them, and have given the rein to all iniquity. But now may God help us, and give us one of those trumpets which overthrew the walls of Jericho. May God help us to tear down those paper walls which the Romanists have built around them, and lift up the scourges which punish the wicked, by exposing their stratagems and wiles."

After such an exordium, Luther begins the assault. He first abjures the idea, that the ecclesiastical and civil powers are so distinct, that the latter has no control over persons connected with the former. "Why should not the magistrate chastise the offending clergy? The secular power has been ordered by God for the punishment of evil-doers; and free scope should be allowed for it to act throughout Christendom—let it touch pope, bishops, priests, monks, nuns, or whomsoever it may. St. Paul says, *Let* EVERY *soul* (consequently the pope and clergy) *be subject to the higher powers*." Luther next attacks the wealth and magnificence of the pope and his cardinals, and exposes their wretched projects for procuring money, by which all Christendom had been impoverished and distressed. "If we want to march against Turks," says he, "let us begin with those Turks who are the worst of all. If we hang thieves, and cut off the heads of brigands, let us not suffer the avarice of Rome to escape, which is the greatest of all robbers and thieves; and that too in the name of St. Peter and of Jesus Christ." He calls upon the pope to lay aside his temporal dominions, to which he has no just claim, and take into his hands the Bible and prayer-book, and keep to his appropriate work of preaching and praying. He urges that no more cloisters may be built for mendicant friars. "God knows we have enough already, and more than enough. Would to heaven they were all levelled with the ground! Vagabonding through a country never has done, and never can do it any good." He condemns the forced celibacy of the clergy; the numerous fasts and festivals of the church; the customary mode of treating heretics; and the systems of education in the universities and schools. In short, Luther undertakes, in this treatise, to make clear and thorough work—to sweep the Augean stable of the papacy of all its corruptions and abominations. In conclusion, he says, "I can easily believe that I may have held too high a tone; that I may have proposed many things which will appear impossible, and attacked existing errors with too much vehemence. But what can I do? Let the world be offended, rather than God! They can but take my life. Again and again have I offered peace to my adversaries. But God has, by their own instruments, compelled me continually to lift up a louder and a louder voice."

This appeal of Luther soon reached all those for whom it was written. It spread throughout Germany with wonderful rapidity. His friends trembled and his enemies raved; but the writing meanwhile was producing its intended effect. The strong voice of Luther had aroused the nation, and prepared it to rally round the standard which he had raised. Even the elector's court, so timid and cautious, manifested no disapprobation, but waited in silence the result.

Nearly at the same time with the publication of his appeal, Luther prepared and published a discourse on the mass; in which he declaimed against the numerous sects of the Romish church, and reproached her most justly for her want of unity. "The multiplicity of laws in matters of conscience has filled the world with sects and divisions. The hatred thence engendered between priests, monks and laity is even greater than that between Christians and Turks. Nay more; priests are mortal enemies to priests, and monks to monks. Each is devoted to his own sect or order, and despises all the rest. The unity and love of Christ are broken up and destroyed."

This discourse on the mass was but a feeble missile, however, compared with one which was almost immediately to follow. In the beginning of October, 1520, Luther's famous tract on "The Babylonian Captivity of the Church" made its appearance. He commences by setting forth, with admirable irony, his high obligations to his enemies. "Whether I will or no," says he, "I am continually learning, urged on as I am by so many masters. Two years ago, I attacked indulgences; but with such faltering indecision, that I am now ashamed of it." Having returned thanks to Prierias, to Eck, to Hochstraten, and his other adversaries, he proceeds, "In the discussion at Leipsic, I denied that the papacy was from God, but admitted that it stood by human right. But now I know that the papacy is nothing but the reign of Babylon, and the violence of the mighty hunter, Nimrod. I therefore request my friends and my enemies, and all booksellers, that they will burn the books I have before written on the subject, and in their stead substitute this single proposition:—*The papacy is a grand hunting chase, led on by the Bishop of Rome, and having for its object the snaring and ruining of captured souls.*" Luther terminated his work on the "Babylonian Captivity" with these words: "I hear that new papal bulls and anathemas have been concocted against me. If so, let this book be regarded as a part of my future recantation. The rest will soon follow, and the whole will form such a recantation as Rome has never yet seen or heard of."

While Luther was contending thus courageously and manfully against the enemies of the truth, his friend Melancthon was engaged in the more quiet pursuit of getting married. As he was not a priest, he had no obstacles of an ecclesiastical nature with which to contend; and the matter was urged on with much earnestness by his friends. They resolved that he should not be wedded to his books alone, but should admit at least a joint partner of his affections and interests. In the autumn of this year, 1520, he was married to Miss Catharine Krapp, daughter of one of the most respectable citizens of Wittemberg. Old John Luther, with his wife and daughters, together with many learned and distinguished persons, attended the celebration of the nuptials.

The wife of Melancthon was distinguished for mildness and gentleness of disposition, and for the excellence of her domestic character. At the same time, she was cautious and timid to a degree bordering on weakness. Whenever her husband proposed to take any step that was likely to compromise his safety, she would overwhelm him with entreaties to desist; to which entreaties he was often constrained to yield. It is not unlikely that the timidity and caution for which Melancthon has been sometimes blamed, may be attributed in part to the influence of Catharine.

The marriage of Melancthon was of service to the Reformation, in that it furnished a domestic hearth, around which all those were free to gather who were beginning to breathe the new life. The number of students who attended his lectures often amounted to two thousand, drawn together from nearly every country of Europe. The number of those who called on him, and partook more or less of his hospitality, was very great. His liberality to the poor and needy was most exemplary. When his money was spent, he would sell some portion of his table service, that so he might acquire the means of relieving the distressed. His extreme good nature exposed him, in some cases, to imposition. He had some ancient gold and silver medals, remarkable for their legends and impressions. As he was showing them, on some occasion, to a stranger, he said, " Take any one of them that you would like." " I would like *them all*," replied the stranger. "I own," says Philip, " that I was a little offended at his request; nevertheless, I gave them to him."

But it is time to look away from Wittemberg to Rome. After the discussion at Leipsic, and the consequent contempt into which Dr. Eck fell in Germany, he formed the resolution to repair to Rome, that by his influence there, he might hasten the destruction of his indomitable adversary. But he had unanticipated difficulties to contend with, even at Rome. The pontiff and cardinals had long dwelt in profound security. For many years, the monks had accused Leo X. of caring for nothing but luxury and pleasure, and of wasting his time in hunting, plays and music. It was difficult to arouse him to a sense of his danger, and to the importance of taking decisive measures. Besides, he might have had some motives of policy in the case. He saw that the violent measures already resorted to had only served to increase the evil; and he hesitated as to the policy of pursuing them further. "May not this intrepid monk, after all, be gained over? Is it possible that the church's power, aided by Italian artifice, should be defeated? Miltitz is still in Germany, and further negotiation must be tried." Thus reasoned the more politic counsellors at Rome. But Eck and his party were resolved not to be foiled. They besieged the pope and the cardinals with fresh courage. All attempts at conciliation, they insisted, were useless. It was high time that the gangrened member were cut off, lest the disorder should spread throughout the body. For hours together, Eck continued in close deliberation with the pontiff. He excited the court and the convents, the people and the church. In his daily walks through the streets, he vented his anger, and called aloud for vengeance. "Eck is moving against me," says Luther, "the lowest depths of hell. He has set the forests of Lebanon in a blaze." At length, he succeeded in his bloody object. The politic counsellors were overborne; Leo began to yield; the condemnation of Luther was determined on; and Eck breathed more freely.

But a new difficulty arose at the papal court. Eck and his party proposed immediately to fulminate the sentence of excommunication; but the civilians objected to so much precipitancy. "The culprit," they said, "must be cited before he is sentenced. Was not Adam cited before he was condemned? 'Adam where art thou?' In the instance of Cain, likewise: 'Where is thy brother Abel?' asked the Eternal." But these singular arguments from holy writ had no weight with the theologians of the assembly, who were intent on accomplishing the work they had undertaken in a summary way. It was finally agreed that Luther's doctrine should be condemned immediately; and that as to himself and his adherents, a term of sixty days should be granted them; after which, if they did not recant, they should all be at once excommunicated.

It was on the 15th of June, that the sacred college agreed on the condemnation, and gave their approbation of a bull to that effect, commencing as follows: "Arise, O Lord! and remember the reproaches wherewith fools reproach thee, all the day long. Arise, O Peter! and remember thy holy Roman church, the mother of all the churches and mistress of the faith. Arise, O Paul! for a new Porphyry is here, attacking thy doctrines, and the holy popes, our predecessors. Arise, O assembly of all the saints! holy church of God! and intercede for us with God Almighty!" The pope, having cited forty-one propositions of Luther, and condemning them as pernicious, scandalous and corrupt, proceeds as follows: "The bishops are to search diligently for the writings of Luther, in which these errors are contained, and to burn them publicly and solemnly, in the presence of the clergy and of the laity. As to Martin himself, what is there, in the name of heaven, that we have not done? Imitating the goodness of the Almighty, we are ready to receive him again into the bosom of the church; and we allow him sixty days, in which to forward to us his recantation in writing, attested by two prelates. Meanwhile, he must, from this moment, cease preaching, teaching, and writing, and commit his works to the flames. And if he do not recant, within sixty days, we do, by these presents, sentence him and his adherents, as open and contumacious heretics." The pope concludes with a long train of excommunications, maledictions, and interdicts against Luther, and all his partisans, with orders to seize their persons and send them to Rome.

After the publication of this bull, but before it was received or known in Germany, Miltitz set on foot another negotiation, with a view to the reconciliation of Luther to Rome. He attended a general meeting of the Augustinian friars, and persuaded them to send a deputation to Luther. All he required now was, that Luther should write a letter to the pope, assuring him that he had never laid any plots against his person. "That will suffice," said he, "to terminate the whole affair." Luther had no kind of objection to writing such a letter as this, though he seems to have had little confidence in its efficacy. After the news of the bull had been received in Germany, he was quite discouraged, and declined writing altogether; but Miltitz sought an interview with him, and persuaded him to make another effort. The principal object of Miltitz in these final endeavours was, if possible, to disappoint and humble Eck. As this blustering agitator had been chiefly instrumental in procuring the bull of excommunication, so he was the appointed messenger to introduce it into Saxony. And not only so, he was already in the neighbourhood, holding in his hands the formidable instrument, which he boasted was to extinguish the Lutheran Reformation. Miltitz desired, if possible, to disappoint him, and to extinguish the Reformation in a different way. He urged Luther to write the proposed letter to the pope, and to renew his former agreement as to desisting from the controversy; to all which Luther at length consented. "I promise to keep silence," said he, "if my adversaries will but do the same. At least I will do all I can to maintain it." Miltitz was overjoyed at his success. He heaped attentions and flatteries upon Luther, and wrote at once to the elector, assuring him that the difficulties would soon be settled.

In fulfilment of his promise, Luther sat down to write once more to the pontiff. It was the last effort of this kind that he was ever to make. His letter has been differently characterized by different persons; some regarding it as a bitter and insulting satire, and others as made up of forced and hypocritical concessions. But, in reality, it was neither the one nor the other; but rather a message of solemn warning, designed and adapted to stir up the mind of the pontiff to a serious investigation and correction of abuses. He commences by saying, that though he had been compelled to appeal from the Roman see to a future general council, yet he harboured not the least ill-will towards the pope, but continually prayed to God to bestow upon him every kind of blessing. He owns that he had treated the impious doctrines of his adversaries with much severity; but this he could not regret, since he had Christ himself for an example. "Of what use," he asks, "is salt, if it hath lost its savour, or the blade of a sword, if it doth not cut? Cursed be he who doeth the Lord's work coldly. It is true that I have attacked the court of Rome. But neither yourself nor any man living can deny that the corruption of your court is greater than that of Sodom or Gomorrah, and that there is no hope left of curing its impiety. For many years past, it has inundated the world with every thing destructive to soul and body. The church of Rome, once pre-eminent for sanctity, is become a den of thieves, a scene of open prostitution, a kingdom of death and hell, so that antichrist himself could not increase its iniquity. And you, O Leo, are all this while as a lamb in the midst of wolves; or as Daniel in the den of lions. Unaided, how can you resist these monsters?

"Full of affection for you, I have always regretted that you were raised to the pontificate at such a period as this. Rome is not worthy of you, or of any other ruler than Satan himself. Indeed, it is he, rather than you, who reigns in that Babylon. O Leo! Leo! You are the most unfortunate of men; and you sit on the most perilous of all thrones! I tell you the truth, not because I hate you, but because I wish you well."

"Is it not true that there is nothing under heaven more corrupt and hateful than the Roman court? It exceeds the very Turks in vice and profligacy. Once as the gate of heaven, it is now as the jaws of hell, distended and kept open by the wrath of God; and when I behold so many poor creatures plunging themselves into it, I must needs cry aloud and spare not, that some may be saved from the frightful abyss. This, O my father, is the reason why I have inveighed so strongly against the Romish see. Far from conspiring against your person, I have felt that I was labouring for your safety, in boldly attacking the prison, or rather the hell in which you are confined."

Luther proceeds to represent to his holiness the treatment he had received from Cardinal Cajetan; and how the endeavours of Miltitz to bring about a reconciliation had been defeated by the vain-glorious interference of Dr. Eck. "Upon him," says he, "must lie the blame of that defeat which has covered Rome with shame. Now then, holy father, I come to you, and entreat you to restrain, if possible, the enemies of peace. I cannot retract my doctrines; neither can I consent that rules of interpretation should be forced upon the Holy Scriptures. The word of God, the source of all liberty, must itself be left free. These two points being granted, there is nothing that I cannot most willingly either do or suffer."

Luther accompanied his letter to the pope with a little book, on the subject of "Christian

Liberty ;" in which he shows, that though the true Christian has been delivered from the bondage of corruption, and brought into that liberty with which Christ makes his people free, still he may, and he should, submit to every rightful, external ordinance, for the Lord's sake. He should become all things for the good of his neighbour, as Christ has become all things for him.

While the bold reformer was thus addressing himself, for the last time, to the Roman pontiff, the terrible bull of excommunication was already in the hands of the dignitaries of the German church, and at the doors of Luther's dwelling. As remarked already, Dr. Eck was the appointed herald and agent for the promulgation of the bull in Saxony, and he was advancing with great pomp and pride for the execution of his dread commission. He seemed to imagine himself the mighty Atlas, bearing upon his shoulders the whole Roman world. But his pride was destined to be soon humbled. His appointment to the office of nuncio created an almost universal dissatisfaction in Germany. The bull itself was thought by many to be the production rather of Eck than of the pontiff;

and, as such, was utterly disregarded. And where its authority was acknowledged, the work of publishing it was attended with much difficulty and delay. Even at Leipsic, Duke George forbade its publication, till an order to that effect should be received from the bishop; which order did not arrive till the following year.

While Eck remained at Leipsic on this business, the students of the university undertook to insult him, at which he fled for refuge to a convent, and was so much affrighted that he trembled in every limb. He afterwards quitted his retreat by night, and fled clandestinely to Coburg. On hearing this, Luther said, "I do not wish him to be killed; but I really hope he may be frustrated in his designs." At Erfurth the students seized the copies of his bull, tore them in pieces, and threw them into the river, saying, "Since it is a bubble, (*bulla*,) let us see it float." Eck did not dare to show himself at Wittemberg, but sent the bull to the prior, threatening him, in case it were not published, with the ruin of the university. But the prior declared, that not having received any communication from the pope on the subject, he must decline its publication. Such was the reception which the condemnation of Luther met with from the learned world.

The manner in which Luther himself regarded the proceeding varied, according to the state of his feelings. Sometimes he ridiculed the whole matter, and treated it with contempt. "I know nothing of Eck's movements," said he, "except that he has arrived, with a long beard, a long bull, and a long purse. But I laugh at the whole of them." At other times he felt the dangers of his situation, and was inclined to treat the subject with greater seriousness. "What is about to happen, I know not, nor do I care to know, assured as I am that he who sits on the throne of heaven has from all eternity foreseen the beginning, the progress, and the end of this affair. Let the blow alight where it may, I am without fear. Not so much as a leaf falls without the will of our Father. How much rather will he care for us. It is a light thing to die for the Word, since the Word which was made flesh hath himself died. If we die with him, we shall live with him; and passing through that which he has passed through before us, we shall be where he is, and dwell with him forever."

It was on the third of October that the papal rescript came into the hands of Luther. "At last," said he, "this Roman bull has been received. I despise it, and resist it, as impious and false, and every way worthy of Eck. It is Christ himself who is therein condemned. No reasons are given in it. I am cited to appear, not that I may be heard, but that I may recant. I will treat it as a forgery, although I believe it to be genuine. I glory in the prospect of suffering for the best of causes. Already I feel in my heart more liberty: For I now know that the pope is Antichrist, and that his chair is that of Satan himself."

The eyes of all Germany were now turned anxiously towards the reformer. "What will he do? Will he succumb and recant, in view of the danger? Or will he stand firm?" He did not keep the public long in suspense. On the 4th of November he discharged his artillery, in his work "Against the Bull of Antichrist." "I can discern the difference," said he, in this tract, "between skill and malice, and I care very little for malice that is so unskilful. To burn books is an act so easy, that even children may perform it. How much more the holy father and his illustrious doctors! One would have looked for some more cunning move. Besides; for aught I care, let them destroy my books. I desire nothing better; for all I wanted was to lead Christians to the Bible, that they might afterwards throw away my writings. If we had but a right understanding of the Scriptures, what need would there be of my books? By God's grace I am now free; and bulls can neither soothe nor intimidate me. My strength and my consolation are in a place where neither men nor devils can ever reach them."

But though the pope's anathemas at the first were disregarded, they soon began, in some places, to take effect. The word of the pontiff still carried force. The stake was still fixed and the fagots piled at his bidding, and fire and torture compelled submission. Every thing seemed to announce that an awful catastrophe was about to put an end to the audacious rebellion of the Augustine monk. In many places scaffolds were raised for the purpose of committing the writings of the heretic to the flames, and ecclesiastical dignitaries and counsellors of state were present at the burning. In a few cases, however, these burnings assumed somewhat of a ridiculous character. The doctors of Louvain, for example, raised a vast pile of wood, and called upon the people to bring in the proscribed books. In obedience to the call, students and citizens were seen making their way through the crowd, carrying huge volumes under their arms, which they hurled into the flames. Their apparent zeal greatly edified the monks and doctors; but the stratagem was soon discovered. The writings of Luther were spared, while great quantities of scholastic and popish works were destroyed.

Luther felt, however, as though some more decisive acts on his part were called for, than any which had yet been performed. The pope had placed him under the ban of the church; he was resolved to place the pope under the ban of Christianity. The sentence of the pontiff had hitherto been absolute; he would now oppose sentence to sentence, that the world might see which was the word of power. He forthwith took steps to renew his appeal to a general council; which he did, on the 17th of November, in the words following:

"Forasmuch as a general council of the Christian church is superior to the pope, especially in matters of faith: Forasmuch as the authority of the pope is inferior to that of Scripture, and he has no right to slay Christ's sheep and cast them into the jaws of the wolf: I, Martin Luther, Doctor of the Holy Scriptures at Wittemberg, on my own behalf, and on behalf of such as stand or shall stand on my side, do, by this instrument, appeal from his holiness, Pope Leo, to a general Christian council, hereafter to be held.

"I appeal from the aforesaid Pope Leo, first, as an unjust judge, who condemns me, without having given me a hearing, and without declaring the grounds of his judgment: Secondly, as a heretic and apostate, misguided, hardened, and condemned by holy writ, who requires me to deny the necessity of Christian faith in the use of the sacraments: Thirdly, as an enemy, an antichrist, an adversary of the Scriptures, and a usurper of their authority, who presumes to set up his own decrees against the declarations of the divine word: And fourthly, as a contemner, calumniator and blasphemer of the holy Christian church, and of every free council, who asserts that a council is nothing in itself."

He concludes with calling upon "the emperor, the electors, princes, counts, barons, knights, gentlemen, cities and municipalities of the whole German nation," to adhere to his protest, and unite with him to resist the antichristian proceedings of the pope. "But if there be any," says he, "who set my entreaties at naught, and prefer to obey the pope rather than God, I do hereby disavow all responsibility on their account, and leave them, together with the pope and all his adherents, after this solemn warning, to the final judgment of the Almighty."

One would have thought that a protest such as this, which was speedily circulated throughout Christendom, was an act sufficiently bold and decisive. But it did not satisfy the mind of Luther. He determined that in nothing would he fall behind Rome. Whatever the sovereign pontiff essays to do against him, he will do against the pontiff. Sentence against sentence he has already pronounced; he will now kin-

Engr. by M. Schmitz.
T. Sinclair Lith. Phil^a.

LUTHER BURNING THE POPE'S BULL.

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dle pile for pile. Accordingly, on the 10th of December, at early dawn, a placard was affixed to the walls of the university at Wittemberg, inviting the professors and students to meet, at nine in the morning, at the east gate, beside the holy cross. A vast number of doctors and youths assembled; and Luther, putting himself at their head, led the procession to the appointed spot. A scaffold had been erected and the wood prepared; and one of the oldest among the masters of arts approached and set fire to it. As the flames arose Luther drew nigh, and cast into the midst of them the canon law, the decretals and extravagants of the popes, the Clementines, and a portion of the works of Dr. Eck. When these had been reduced to ashes, Luther took the pope's bull in his hand, held it up, and said with a loud voice, "Since thou hast afflicted the Lord's Holy One, (Christ,) may fire unquenchable afflict and consume thee." Whereupon he threw it into the flames. He then, with much composure, put himself again at the head of the procession, and bent his steps towards the city; the crowd of doctors, professors and students returning, with loud applause, in his train.

By this act Luther distinctly proclaimed his separation from the papal church. He accepted the excommunication which Rome had pronounced. He declared, in the face of all Christendom, that between him and the pope there was henceforth to be war, even to the death. "Hitherto," said he, "I have been only jesting with the pope. The mighty struggle is but just begun. I entered upon this work in the name of God; and God will bring it to a close by his own power. If they dare to burn my books, of which it is no vain boast to say that they contain more of the gospel than all the pope's books put together, I may with far better reason burn theirs, which are wholly worthless."

On the morning after the burning above described, Luther lectured as usual in the hall of the university, which was excessively crowded. When his discourse was finished, he paused for a moment, and then said, "I warn you to be on your guard against the laws and statutes of the pope. I have burned the decretals, but that is mere child's play. It is time, and more than time, that the papal see, with all its corruptions and abominations, was overturned." Assuming then a more solemn tone, he proceeded, "If you do not, with your whole hearts, resist the impious usurpation of the pope, you cannot be saved. Whoever takes pleasure in the popish doctrine and worship will assuredly be lost to all eternity. True, if we reject that false creed, we must expect to encounter every kind of danger; but far better expose ourselves to danger in the present world than to hold our peace. For my own part, I will never cease to warn my brethren of the wound and the plague of Babylon, lest any of those who now walk with us should backslide into the pit of hell."

This was new and solemn doctrine to those who heard it. They had often been told that there was no salvation out of the Romish church; they were now led to fear that there was none in it. Especially were they led to fear, if, after "having been once enlightened, and made partakers of the heavenly gift," they should fall again into the errors of Rome, their fall would be irretrievable and eternal; since by such an act they would "crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame."

CHAPTER VIII.

Melancthon's Discourse to the States of the Empire—Luther's "retractations"—The elector refuses to give up Luther—Erasmus's opinion of Luther—Luther's advice to the penitents—Proves that the papacy is Antichrist—Increasing popularity of the reformers at Wittemberg—Staupitz alarmed, and begins to draw back—Luther's letters—Diet at Worms, in 1521—A new bull of excommunication against Luther—Money sent from Rome to the diet—Aleander, the pope's legate, seeks to effect the destruction of Luther in his absence—The Catholic members of the diet demand a redress of grievances—A list of grievances presented—Aleander tries to prevent the appearance of Luther at the diet—The feelings of Luther at this time.

The proceedings detailed at the close of the last chapter mark an important epoch in the history of the Reformation. In his heart Luther had been alienated from the pope, by the dispute relative to his supremacy, at Leipsic. But at the moment when he burned the decretals and the bull, he declared, in the most impressive manner, his separation from the pope and his church, and his adherence to the church universal, as founded by the apostles of Christ. At the east gate of Wittemberg he kindled a flame which three centuries have not been able to extinguish.

The undaunted spirit which animated Luther was speedily communicated to his friends and countrymen. Melancthon, about this time, addressed a Discourse to the States of the Empire, which, for elegance of style and strength of reasoning, is worthy of its estimable author. After having proved from Scripture that the pope is not superior to other bishops, he inquires of the States, "What hinders us from depriving the pope of that authority with which we have invested him? Recollect that you are Christians, princes of a Christian nation; and hasten, I beseech you, to rescue the piteous wreck of Christianity from the tyrannous hand of Antichrist. They who would persuade you that you have no jurisdiction over these priests are deceiving you grossly. Let the same spirit that animated Jehu against the priests of Baal urge you, by that memorable example, to crush the Romish superstition; a superstition more detestable, by far, than the idolatry of Baal itself." Such was the language in which the mild Melancthon thought proper to address the princes of Germany.

Some of the friends of the Reformation were alarmed at the steps which had been taken, and gave utterance to their feelings of concern and terror. Among these was Luther's earliest religious friend and spiritual father, Staupitz. But in writing to him, Luther gave no intimations of concession or conciliation. "All that has been done as yet," said he, "is mere play. The tumult is continually growing more and more tumultuous. The papacy has ceased to be what it was yesterday, and the day before. Excommunicate me, and burn my writings, it may—ay, and put me to death; but the Reformation which is now going forward it can never stop. When I burned the bull, it was with inward fear and trembling; but I now look back upon that act with greater pleasure than upon any passage of my life."

It was matter of reproach against Luther with some, that he stood comparatively alone. "But who knows," he asks, "whether God has not called me, and chosen me, for this very purpose; and whether those that despise me have not reason to fear lest they be found despisers of God himself? Moses was alone when the Israelites were led out of Egypt; Elijah was alone in the time of Ahab; Ezekiel was alone in Babylon. God has never chosen for his prophet either the high-priest, or any other person of exalted rank; but generally men of a mean and low condition, as in the case of Amos, who was a simple shepherd. I say not that I am a prophet; but of this I am sure, that the word of God is with me, and not with my enemies."

As Luther had long and often been urged to retract, he published, at this time, what he called his retractations. "In deference to the holy and learned bull," said he, "I now retract much that I have advanced on the subject of indulgences. If my books deserve to be burned, it is because they contain concessions to the pope in respect to that doctrine of indulgences; on which account I myself now condemn them to the flames."

Then follows another retractation in respect to John Huss. "I now say, not (as formerly) that some of the articles propounded by Huss are orthodox, but that they all are so. The pope, in condemning Huss, condemned the gospel. I have gone five times as far as he, and yet I greatly fear that I have not gone far enough. Huss says that a wicked pope is not a member of the Christian church; but I say, that were St. Peter himself now seated in the Romish chair, I should deny that he was pope by divine appointment."

The elector was not in Saxony, at the time when the excommunication of Luther was received there, but at Aix la Chapelle, where he had gone to attend the coronation of Charles V. When the ceremony was over, he accompanied the emperor to Cologne, where he remained some little time. During his absence, the question was often and anxiously revolved, "What course will the elector take, in regard to this bull of excommunication? Will he concur in the execution of it, or will he disregard it? Will he protect the reformer, or will he abandon him?"

These questions were more easily asked than answered. The cautious Frederic had not yet committed himself to the cause of the Reformation; and his circumstances abroad were not at all favourable to his receiving correct impressions in regard to it. The pope had two powerful legates in attendance at the coronation, who would exert all their influence with the emperor, the German princes, and especially with Frederic, to effect the destruction of the excommunicated heretic. These legates (of whom the violent Aleander was one) first exerted themselves to procure the burning of Luther's writings; but this, they were reminded, was a very small matter. " Do you imagine," it was asked, " that the doctrines of Luther exist only in those books which you are committing to the flames? These doctrines are deeply engraven where you cannot obliterate them—in the minds and hearts of the German nation. If you mean to employ force, you must destroy more than one or two. Myriads of swords must be unsheathed, and multitudes of victims must be slaughtered. A pile of fagots, to burn a few sheets of paper, will be of no avail; nor does it become the dignity either of the emperor or of the sovereign pontiff to employ such weapons." Nevertheless, Aleander clung to his fagots. " These flames that we kindle," said he, " are a sentence of condemnation, conspicuous far and wide—legible even to such as can read no other."

The new emperor, although he had consented to the burning of Luther's books, refused to give sentence against his life, until the consent of the German princes, and especially of the elector Frederic, should be obtained. The whole influence of the legates was, therefore, brought to bear upon Frederic, to bring him to consent to the destruction of Luther. "Consider," said Aleander, "the infinite peril into which this man is plunging the Christian commonwealth. Unless a remedy is speedily applied, the fate of the empire is sealed. Why has the empire of the Greeks been destroyed, but because they refused submission to the pope? You cannot join yourself to Luther, without being dissevered from Christ. In the name of his holiness, I demand of you two things: first, that you cause Luther's writings to be burned; and secondly, that you inflict upon the heretic the punishment he deserves, or else that you send him a prisoner to Rome."

To these insolent demands the elector replied with his usual calmness: "This is a matter of too much importance to be decided instantly. Our determination in regard to it shall be communicated to you in due time."

The position of the elector was now a difficult one. On the one side were arrayed the emperor, most of the German princes, and the sovereign pontiff, whose authority Frederic, at this time, had no thought of shaking off; and on the other was a poor, defenceless monk; for against Luther alone was this assault levelled. But then there was the learning and holiness of the man, and the manifest justice of his cause. There were also on the side of Luther some powerful intercessors; particularly Spalatin, the chaplain, and John Frederic, one of the nephews of the elector, who had fully embraced the reformer's doctrines.

Under these various influences, the mind of Frederic, perhaps, wavered for a time; but he soon came to the right decision. He shuddered at the thought of delivering such a man as Luther into the hands of his implacable enemies. "Justice," thought he, "must have precedence even of the pope." On the 4th of November, he signified to the papal legates how much he disapproved of the proceedings of Eck in Saxony, and how difficult it would be to execute any measures against Luther, on account of the multitudes who had united in his appeal to a general council, and thus made common cause with him. He further said, that neither his imperial majesty, nor any one else, had yet made it appear to him that Luther's writings had been refuted, and were fit only for the flames. He demanded, therefore, for Luther, that he should be furnished with a safe-conduct, and be permitted to answer for himself before a learned, pious and impartial tribunal.

This decision of the elector, as might have been expected, threw the arrogant Aleander into a great passion. "We will execute the bull," said he. "We will pursue and burn the writings of the heretic. And as for his person, the pope has little inclination to imbrue his hands in the blood of the unhappy wretch."

But when the news of the decision reached Wittemberg, the friends of Luther were transported with joy. "The German nobles," said Melancthon, "will follow the guidance of the prince, whom they revere as their Nestor. If Homer styled his aged hero *the bulwark of the Greeks;* why may not our Frederic be surnamed *the bulwark of Germany?*"

At the time of the decision above described. the learned Erasmus was at Cologne, in company with the emperor and the princes of Germany. Erasmus was the acknowledged head of that philosophical, academical party, which for centuries had been labouring to correct the abuses of the Romish church, but without success. In the early period of the Reformation, he held a sort of neutral position; sometimes attracted towards Luther and his associates, and then suddenly drawn back again into the sphere of Romish delusion. The elector, knowing that the opinion of a man so highly respected as Erasmus would have much weight, requested and obtained an interview with the illustrious Hollander. The elector was standing before the fire, with Spalatin by his side, when Erasmus was ushered into the chamber. "What think you of Luther?" asked Frederic immediately. Surprised by the question so suddenly put to him, the prudent Erasmus endeavoured to evade a reply. He screwed up his mouth, bit his lips, and continued silent. Hereupon the elector raised his eyebrows, as his custom was when he meant to press an explicit answer, and looked Erasmus full in the face. The latter, at a loss how to extricate himself from the difficulty, replied at last in a jocular tone, "Luther has committed two grievous sins. He has attacked the pope's crown and the monks' bellies." The elector smiled, but intimated to his visiter that he was in earnest. Erasmus then replied as follows: "The origin of all these dissensions is the hatred the monks bear to learning, and the fear of seeing their tyranny brought to an end. What are the weapons of their warfare against Luther? Clamour, cabal, malice and slander. The more virtuous a man is, and the more strongly attached to the doctrines of the gospel, the less does he find to censure in Luther's proceedings. The severity of the bull has roused the indignation of all good men; for they see in it none of that gentleness befitting the vicar of Christ. The danger of executing such a bull is far greater than some persons imagine. There are difficulties in the way which cannot be easily surmounted. To begin the reign of Charles with so unpopular an act as the imprisonment of Luther, would be an ill omen for the future. The world is thirsting for gospel truth; let us beware how we resist so holy a desire. The whole question should be examined by dispassionate and competent judges. This is the only course that can be followed, consistently with the dignity of the pope himself."

This was an honest hour with Erasmus. The presence of the elector and of Spalatin threw him off his guard, and he spake with a frankness to which he was not accustomed. He even consented to reduce his opinion to writing, and left it with Spalatin;—though he afterwards requested to withdraw the paper.

As an offset to all this, however, he immediately wrote a most submissive letter to the pope,—which the pope was pleased to answer most graciously. This latter circumstance was a source of deep mortification to Aleander. In his zeal for popery, he administered a severe reproof to the pope himself, that his holiness should deign to write such a letter to Erasmus. But his holiness comforted him by saying, "We must not seem to perceive the evil intentions of the man. Prudence forbids it. Let us not close the door of repentance against him."

Defeated in their public attempts to effect the destruction of Luther and his works, the myrmidons of Rome had recourse to more private methods. The priests were instructed to carry the matter to the confessional, and to press upon the consciences of those who sought absolution inquiries such as these: "Have you read the writings of Luther? Have you them in your possession? Do you regard them as true, or heretical?" If the penitent hesitated to pronounce the prescribed anathema, the priest refused him absolution. In this way, the consciences of many were distressed. Great agitation prevailed among the people. Numbers who had embraced the gospel seemed likely to be brought again under the papal yoke. Luther was speedily informed of what was going on; nor was he slow in lifting up his indignant voice against it. He addressed the penitents in a tone at once fearless and scriptural, and in a way to inspire them with the requisite courage and resolution. "When you are asked whether or not you approve of my books, let your answer be, 'You are a confessor, not an inquisitor or jailer. It is my duty to confess whatsoever my conscience prompts me to disclose; it is yours to abstain from prying into the secrets of my heart. Give me absolution first, and then dispute with Luther, or the pope, or whomsoever you please; but beware of turning the sacrament of penance into an instrument of strife and debate.' And if the confessor should refuse to yield, I would dispense altogether with his absolution. Be not disquieted. If man will not absolve you, God will. Rejoice, therefore, that you are absolved by God himself, and come forward fearlessly to the sacrament of the altar. The priest will have to answer at the last day for the absolution he has withheld. Christ, the true bishop, will himself supply your spiritual wants." This stirring exhortation of Luther was read in many a private dwelling, and awakened courage and faith in many a troubled, desponding heart.

But it was not enough for him to stand on the defensive. He felt that he must become the assailant, and return (as his custom was) blow for blow. "I will raise the choler of that Italian beast," he said; and he kept his word. He published a work in which he proved from the prophecies of Daniel and John, and from the epistles of Paul, Peter, and Jude—that the kingdom of Antichrist, predicted and described in the Bible, was no other than the papacy. Perhaps none of the works of Luther had a more powerful influence on the general mind than this. The fearful image of Antichrist, seated on the pontifical throne, was present to every imagination, and filled it with a sacred dread. The pope's authority, which had so long been regarded with the deepest reverence, was now the object of general detestation and terror.

Notwithstanding the anathemas of the papal bull, the popularity of the reformers at Wittemberg had not been so great at any time as now. The university was thronged with students, and the convent chapel and the city church were both too small for the eager crowds that hung on the lips of Luther. The prior of the Augustines was in constant alarm, lest the buildings should give way, under the weight of the multitudes that filled them. Nor was this enthusiasm confined to Wittemberg. From all parts of Germany—from princes, nobles, scholars, and persons of every grade in life, letters poured in upon the reformer, which spoke the language of encouragement and faith. Nor did he suffer these letters to remain unanswered. Three printing presses were incessantly employed in multiplying copies of his various writings. His discourses, like so many winged messengers of truth, passed rapidly from hand to hand, diffusing light and consolation in the cottage, the cloister and in the abodes of kings.

Nor were the weapons of the gospel alone employed in promoting the cause of the Reformation. Caustic satires, exciting pictures and songs, mock processions, and theatrical representations were occasionally resorted to, in setting forth different parts of the papal system, and exposing them to ridicule and contempt. We mention these things, not to praise them, but to exhibit truly the spirit of the age, and the means employed in stirring up the people to cast from them the bondage of the papal yoke.

But in the midst of all his encouragements, the great reformer had some trials. He had the mortification to see some of his early friends appearing inclined to waver and retrace their steps. His old friend Staupitz had been suspected and accused, and had consented to submit to the judgment of his holiness. Whereupon Luther wrote to him, with much affection, but with great plainness. "If Christ loves you, he will constrain you to take back that letter. When our Lord is rejected, stripped, blasphemed, this is not the time to shrink back, but to sound the onset. You exhort me to be humble: I exhort you to be firm. You have too much humility, as I have too much pride. If you will not follow Christ, you must let me advance alone. I will press onward; and the prize of the high calling shall be mine."

Although Luther was no longer a papist or a monk, he still wore his monastic garb, and resided in the convent of the Augustinians as usual. The spirit which actuated him at this critical period may be best learned from some of his private letters. Writing to the elector, he says, "Amid the storms that have assailed me, I always hoped that I should be permitted to enjoy repose at last. But I now see that this was one of the thoughts of man. Day after day the waves are rolling higher, and on every side the ocean hems me in. Fiercely, indeed, is the tempest raging, yet I still grasp the sword with one hand, while with the other I build up the walls of Zion."

Yet the confidence with which he was animated was not a confidence in his own powers or strength. He deeply felt his weakness and imperfection, and often expressed it in his letters to his friends. "Thou doest well," says he to Pellican, "to pray for me; for I cannot give up myself, as I ought, to holy exercises. Life is a cross to me. Thou doest well in exhorting me to moderation. I feel the need of it. But I am not master of myself. An impulse, I know not of what nature, hurries me away. I bear enmity to no man living; but I am so beset with external enemies, that I cannot be sufficiently watchful against the seductions of Satan. I entreat your prayers."

It was at the very commencement of the year 1521, that the first diet or general assembly of the German States held since the accession of Charles to the empire convened at Worms. The occasion was one of very special interest. The expected presence of the emperor, as well as the certainty that many difficult and important questions were to be decided, had drawn most of the German princes together. But the question of all others the most interesting and perplexing, which was likely to come before the diet, was that of the Reformation. Luther was an excommunicated man ; and were the anathemas of the pope to be summarily executed upon him ? Or was he to be sheltered and protected, at least till he could have a hearing ?

Unwilling to displease either the pontiff or the Elector of Saxony, Charles had written to Frederic, before the assembling of the diet, requesting that he would bring Luther along with him ; and Luther had determined at all hazards to go. "If they intend to use violence against me," said he, "as they probably do, (for assuredly it is with no view of gaining information that they require me to appear before them,) I commit the matter into the hands of God. He still lives and reigns, who preserved the three Israelites in the fiery furnace. If it be not his will to deliver me, my life is little worth. Let us only take care that the gospel be not exposed to the insults of the ungodly ; and let us shed our blood in its defence rather than allow them to triumph."

But as the time approached, the courage of the elector failed him. He feared that to take Luther with him to Worms would be to conduct him to a scaffold. And as Providence would have it, the emperor himself, influenced chiefly by Aleander, the pope's legate, (who insisted that it would be the height of scandal for an excommunicated heretic to be admitted to appear before the assembly,) gave orders that Luther should be left at Wittemberg.

Aleander, having succeeded in preventing Luther's appearance at Worms, used every means, in his absence, to effect his destruction. He accused him, not only of disobedience and heresy, but also of sedition, rebellion, impiety and blasphemy; and urged upon the emperor, the princes, the prelates, and other members of the assembly, in the strongest terms, the necessity of his condemnation. But for reasons of state with some, and from a personal regard for Luther on the part of others, his representations were received with comparative indifference.

Baffled in this direction, he next turned his eyes towards Rome. His object was twofold; First, to obtain a more formal condemnation of Luther and his adherents; and secondly, to procure money to be distributed in the diet, to such of the members as could be influenced by a bribe. "Germany," he wrote to the Cardinal de Medicis, "is falling away from Rome. The princes, one after another, are abandoning the pope. A little more delay —a little more compromise—and the case is hopeless. Money! money! or Germany is lost!"

This earnest appeal to Rome was not in vain. The pope issued a new bull of excommunication against the heretical doctor, in which not only himself, but all who took part with him, were anathematized, and were declared to have forfeited, for themselves and their descendants, all their honours and their worldly goods. Every faithful Christian was commanded to shun all intercourse with the accursed crew. In every place where the heresy had gained footing, it was the duty of the priests, on Sundays and holidays, to publish the sentence of excommunication. On these occasions the sacred vessels and ornaments were to be removed from the altar; the cross was to be laid upon the ground; twelve priests, holding lighted torches, were to dash them down and extinguish them, by trampling them under foot; the bishop was to proclaim the condemnation of those ungodly men; the bells were to be tolled; the priests, in concert, were to chant anathemas and maledictions; and the service was to be concluded with a discourse of the most unsparing denunciation against Luther and his adherents.

Thus much for the new bull which was issued from Rome. In connexion with it, large sums of money were forwarded to Aleander, which he was directed to scatter with an unsparing hand; also briefs, couched in the strongest language, and addressed to the highest authorities in the empire.

Thus armed, Aleander and his party made another desperate onset to procure the condemnation of Luther. "Not a day passes," wrote the elector to his brother John, "but measures hostile to Luther are brought forward. His enemies now demand that he should be placed under the ban of the pope and the emperor jointly. To injure him by every possible method is their single aim. The men who parade their red hats before us—the cardinals and their followers—pursue this work with an unwearied zeal." On one occasion, Aleander is reported to have given vent to his feelings in the following language: "If ye seek, O ye Germans! to throw off your allegiance to Rome, we will bring things to such a pass that ye shall unsheath the sword of extermination against each other, and perish in your own blood." "It is in this way," says Luther, "that the pope and his legates feed Christ's sheep!"

Some of the emperor's counsellors, particularly the civilians, were unwilling to have recourse to extreme measures, preferring rather to attempt an adjustment by compromise. "Let us entangle Luther in negotiations, and silence him by the help of some partial concessions. To stifle the flame, not fan it, is the true policy. If the monk fall into the trap, we have gained our object. By accepting a compromise, he will fix a gag on his own mouth, and ruin his cause. To save appearances, a few external reforms must be granted. The elector will be satisfied, the pope will be conciliated, and things will move on in the usual track." Such was the advice and the policy of some of the emperor's council. But the influence of Aleander seems to have prevailed over that of all others. Charles was not unwilling to concur in the condemnation of Luther, if the consent of the diet could be gained. "Convince the diet," said he, "and my approbation shall not be wanting." This was just what Aleander desired; and it was agreed that he should address the assembly, on the approaching 13th of February.

On the day appointed, the legate, who was one of the most eloquent men of his age, appeared before the princes, and harangued them for the space of three long hours. He furiously attacked the doctrines of Luther, represented him to have sinned against the dead and the living, against heaven and earth, against all the interests of society, against the authority of both church and State. He charged him with having inculcated enough of error to warrant the burning of a hundred thousand heretics. He undertook to defend the authority of the pope, and the character of the church, against what he called the blasphemies of Luther, and concluded by calling on the emperor and the princes to do their duty, and exterminate at once that newly-spawned heresy, which threatened to convert God's kingdom into a howling wilderness—a haunt for wild beasts, and to plunge Germany into the same condition of barbarism and desolation to which Asia had been reduced by the superstition of Mohammed.

The address of the legate produced a strong temporary impression upon the assembly, especially as there was no one present to reply. The princes looked at each other, with countenances betraying excitement and alarm, and murmurs began to arise from various quarters against the reformer and his supporters. But the influence of the speech soon passed away, and the members of the diet began to feel, if not more reconciled to Luther, at least determined to set forth and suppress the intolerable grievances of the Germanic nation.

It is remarkable, that these grievances were, in a few days, brought forward, and their suppression demanded, by Duke George of Saxony, who was probably the most inveterate hater of Luther of any member of the assembly. "The diet," said he, "must not lose sight of the grievances of which it has to claim redress from the court of Rome. How numerous are the abuses that have crept into our dominions." The noble duke went on to notice the annats, by which the empire was yearly drained of large sums of money—the leasing and sale of ecclesiastical benefices—the toleration granted to rich offenders, while the poor, who had not the ability to purchase impunity, were severely punished—the gross perversion of the funds of the church for the private benefit of the pope and his dependents—the shops in the large cities for the sale of indulgences, by which the last farthing was squeezed from the poor man's purse—ecclesiastics permitted to indulge freely in practices for which other men were degraded and punished—penances so devised as to betray the penitent into a repetition of offence, in order that more money might be exacted from him. "These," said the duke, "are but a few of the abuses which cry out on Rome for redress. All shame is laid aside, and one object alone incessantly pursued,—money! ever more money! So that the very men whose duty it is to disseminate truth are engaged in nothing but the propagation of falsehood. And yet they are not merely tolerated, but rewarded; because the more they lie, the larger are their gains. This is the foul source from which so many corrupt-ed streams flow out on every side. A thorough reform must be effected; to accomplish which a general council must be assembled. Wherefore, most excellent princes and lords, I respectfully beseech you to give this matter your immediate attention."

After the duke had spoken thus freely and plainly, other members of the diet brought forward their grievances. Even the ecclesiastical princes concurred in these complaints. "We have a pontiff," said they, "who is occupied only with pleasure and the chase; while the church preferments of Germany are bestowed on gunners, falconers, valets, ass-drivers, grooms, guardsmen, and other people of the same stamp, ignorant, inexperienced, corrupt, and strangers to our nation."

Luther himself had not spoken out with greater boldness against the abuses of Rome than did some of these Catholic members of the diet at Worms. But there was this difference: they pointed out the evil; while Luther, together with the evil, brought into view the proper remedy. He proved that the sinner receives the true indulgence—that remission of sins which comes from God, solely by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. "How shall a man become holy?" asks Luther. "A Cordelier will reply, 'Put on a gray hood, and tie a cord round your middle.' The pope will answer, 'Hear mass and fast.' But the Christian says, 'Believe in Christ.' Faith, and that alone, justifies and saves. We must have eternal life before good works. When we are born anew and made children of God, then, and then only, we perform good works."

In consequence of the complaints that were uttered by different members, the diet appointed a committee to draw up and report a list of their grievances. The enumeration extended to a hundred and one. A deputation composed of secular and ecclesiastical princes presented this report to the emperor, with an earnest request that he would see that justice was done, conformably to the engagement he had contracted on his elevation to the throne. "What a loss of Christian souls," said they to the emperor, "what injustice, what extortion, are the daily fruits of those scandalous practices to which the spiritual head of Christendom affords his countenance? The ruin and dishonour of our nation must be averted.

We therefore very humbly but very earnestly beseech you to sanction a general reformation, to undertake the work, and to carry it through."

This urgent remonstrance of the diet seems to have surprised both Aleander and the emperor. It had not been expected. They were still more surprised, to discover an unwillingness, on the part of the assembly, to decide upon the case of Luther, in his absence. His friends insisted that it would be the height of injustice to condemn the man, without having heard him, and without ascertaining from his own lips that he was the author of the books which it was proposed to burn. While his enemies admitted that his doctrines had taken such fast hold of men's minds, that it would be impossible to check their progress without allowing him a hearing.

By these indications in the assembly, Aleander was greatly disturbed and alarmed. From Luther's learning and intrepidity, and from the ignorance of the princes before whom he would plead, he felt that he had every thing to fear. He conversed with the emperor, and with those members of the diet over whom he supposed he might have some influence. "There shall be no disputing with Luther, you say; but how can you be sure that the genius of this audacious man, the fire that flashes from his eye, the eloquence of his speech, the mysterious spirit that animates him, will not suffice to excite a tumult? Already there are many that revere him as a saint, and his picture is everywhere to be seen encircled with rays of glory, like those which surround the heads of the blessed. If he must needs appear, beware, at all events, of pledging the public faith for his safety."

But while the great ones of the earth were thus agitated and perplexed with the case of Luther, he seems to have enjoyed great quietness and peace in his retired cell at Wittemberg. He was meditating (with reference to his own case) on those ecstatic words of the mother of Jesus: "*My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he that is mighty hath done to me great things, and holy is his name. He hath showed strength with his arm. He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree.*" "O what boldness of speech," exclaimed Luther, "in this young virgin! By a single word, she brands all the strong with weakness, all the mighty with faintness, all the wise with folly, and all those whose name is glorious on the earth with disgrace! She casts all strength, all might, all wisdom, all glory, at the feet of God alone! *He hath showed strength with his arm.* Destruction comes, when none has marked its approach. Deliverance comes, when none has dared to look for it. God leaves his children in oppression and misery, so that every one says, They are past all hope. But then it is that he shows strength with his arm. When man's strength ends, God's strength begins. At another time, he suffers his enemies to exalt themselves in their pomp and vain-glory. They become inflated with their own wisdom; and then, when the eyes of their fellow-men are dazzled with their greatness, God's arm is lifted up, and lo! the fabric they have been rearing disappears in a moment, like a bubble bursting in the air."

While Luther was fortifying his heart with reflections such as these, he received an intimation from Spalatin, that the emperor was about to summon him to Worms to make a public retractation of his doctrines. In reply he says, "If the emperor sends for me only to retract, my answer shall be that I will remain here; which will be all the same as though I had been to Worms, and returned again. And if the emperor then chooses to send for me to put me to death, as an enemy of the empire, I shall be ready to obey the summons; for, by Christ's help, I will never abandon his word in the hour of battle. I know that these bloodthirsty men will never rest till they have taken my life. God grant that my death may be laid to the charge of the papists alone."

CHAPTER IX.

Luther summoned to appear at Worms—Bugenhagen at Wittemberg—Luther leaves Wittemberg—Arrives at Weimar—At Erfurth—Meets Justus Jonas—Arrives at Frankfort—Papists try in vain to stop him—His entry into Worms—His desertion and prayer—His first appearance before the diet—His second appearance—His answers and appeal—Persists in the answer that he had given—The emperor's indiscreet decision—The diet divided—Great pains taken to bring Luther to retract, but in vain—He is ordered to leave Worms—His departure.

In the preceding chapter, we saw the imperial diet calling for Luther, and the pope's legate endeavouring to prevent his appearance. But Charles was not long in forming his resolution. The voice of the diet was not to be disregarded; and besides, the appearance of Luther before the assembly seemed absolutely necessary in order to the adjustment of the difficulty. Charles accordingly resolved to cite him to Worms, but without giving him a safe-conduct. The designs of the emperor in this latter particular were overruled, however, by the diet; and Luther received, in connexion with his summons, the most ample assurances of personal safety. His safe-conduct from the emperor was directed as follows: "To the worshipful, our well-beloved and godly Doctor Martin Luther, of the order of the Augustines;"—a singular form of address to be given at that day, to an excommunicated, anathematized heretic. The instrument required all princes, lords, magistrates and others, to respect the safe-conduct granted to Luther, under pain of being dealt with as offenders against the emperor and the empire. A special messenger was appointed by the emperor to communicate the summons to Luther, and to escort him to Worms.

On the 24th of March, 1521, the imperial herald entered Wittemberg, and delivered his writ of summons into the hands of the reformer. It was a moment of anxiety and terror to his friends; but the composure of Luther was undisturbed. "The papists," said he, "have little desire to see me at Worms; but they long for my condemnation and death. No matter! Pray not for me, but for the word of God. My blood will scarcely be cold, before thousands and tens of thousands in every land will be made to answer for the shedding of it. The 'most holy' Antichrist, the father, master, and chief of manslayers, is resolved that it shall be spilt. Amen. The will of the Lord be done. Christ will give me his spirit to overcome these ministers of Satan. I despise them while I live; I will conquer them in death. They are striving hard to force me to recant. My recantation shall be this: I formerly said that the pope was Christ's vicar; I now say, that he is the adversary of the Lord, and the apostle of the devil."

It was a providential occurrence for the Reformation, that Bugenhagen, a noble and powerful preacher of the gospel, who had been driven out from Pomerania (his native land) by persecution, sought a refuge at Wittemberg, just as Luther was ready to depart. He was received with much cordiality, and appointed to expound the Psalms during the reformer's absence. The year following, he became minister of the church in Wittemberg, and continued to preside over it for six-and-thirty years. He was frequently styled Pomeranus, from the country of his birth;

and sometimes simply the pastor, from his office.

It was on the 2d of April, that Luther took leave of Wittemberg and his friends. As he departed, he turned to Melancthon and said with much emotion, "If I never return, and my enemies should take my life, cease not, brother, to teach and stand fast in the truth. Labour in my stead, since I can no longer work. If thy life be spared, my death will matter little." Then committing his soul to Him who is faithful, he stepped into his carriage and left the city. He was accompanied in the same carriage, by a legal counsellor whose name was Schurff, by his friend Amsdorff, and a pious student. The imperial herald, in full costume, wearing the imperial eagle, went before them on horseback. In all places through which they passed, there seemed to be a general presentiment that Luther was going to meet his doom; still he was unmoved. As they entered Weimar, they saw the emperor's officers passing from street to street, demanding with a loud voice, that the writings of Luther should be given up to them. "Well, doctor," asked the herald, in alarm, "will you go any farther?" "Yes," replied Luther, "I will go on, though I should be put under an interdict in every town." At Weimar, Luther had an interview with Duke John, the elector's brother, at whose request he consented to preach. His sermon was blessed to the conversion of a Franciscan monk, by the name of Voit, who afterwards became a professor at Wittemberg. The duke kindly assisted Luther with money for his journey.

As he approached Erfurth he was met by a troop of horsemen, consisting of citizens and members of the university, who came out, of their own accord, to do him honour. They escorted him into the city, to the convent of the Augustines—the same in which he had formerly resided—where he was expected to lodge. On the following Sunday he preached to an assembly so crowded that there was an alarm, for a moment, under the apprehension that the house was giving way. In his sermon he said not a word about himself, or his peculiar circumstances, but published salvation by faith in Christ. "I affirm," said he, "that even the holy mother of God is saved, not by her virginity, nor her maternity, nor yet by her purity, or her works, but solely by means of faith." Towards the conclusion of the discourse he insisted strenuously, as usual, upon the necessity of works as the fruits and evidences of faith. "Since God has saved us, let us so order our works that he may take pleasure in them. Art thou rich? Let thy riches be the supply of other men's poverty. Art thou poor? Let thy service minister to the rich. If thou labour for thyself alone, the service which thou offerest to God is a mere pretence."

It was at Erfurth that Luther became first acquainted with Justus Jonas, then rector of the University. Jonas solicited and obtained the privilege of accompanying Luther to Worms. After his return he was elected provost of the church at Wittemberg, where he continued to labour to the end of life. Some years after, Melancthon thus characterizes the different religious teachers at Wittemberg. "Bugenhagen is exegetical; I am a logician; Jonas is the preacher; but Luther excels in all;" —"a diversity of gifts, but the same Spirit."

Pursuing his journey, Luther came to Eisenach, where he was taken suddenly ill; but in consequence of bleeding and the use of cordials, he was so much revived as to be able to proceed the following day. Everywhere, as he passed, the people of the country flocked around him. They were anxious to see the bold confessor who was going to present himself, bare-headed, in the presence of his enemies. Some said to him, as he passed along, "There are plenty of cardinals and bishops at Worms. They will burn you to ashes, as they did John Huss." But Luther replied with his characteristic ardour, "Though they should kindle a fire whose flame should reach from Worms to Wittemberg, and rise up to heaven, in the name of the Lord I would go through it, and would stand before them. I would enter the jaws of the behemoth, and break his teeth, and there confess the Lord Jesus Christ." One day, when he had entered an inn, and the crowd was as usual pressing around him, a military officer approached him and said, "Are you the man who has undertaken to reform the church? How can you expect to succeed?" "Yes," replied Luther, "I am the man. I place my dependence on that Almighty God, whose word and commandment are before me." The officer, deeply affected, gazed on him and said, "Dear friend, there is much in what you say. I serve the Emperor Charles; but your master is greater than mine. He will help and protect you."

At length Luther arrived at Frankfort, where he rested a little, and whence he dropped a line to Spalatin—the only one he had written during his journey. "I have arrived here," said he, "although Satan has tried to stop me on the way by sickness. From Eisenach to this place I have been suffering, and am now in a worse condition than ever. My enemies would fain terrify me; but Christ lives, and we shall enter Worms in spite of all the councils of hell and all the powers of the air. Therefore engage a lodging for me."

As the accounts of Luther's progress reached Worms, the partisans of popery were alarmed. They had not expected that he would obey the emperor's summons. Some expedient must be resorted to, to stop him on his way, at least till the term of his safe-conduct has expired. With this view, several of the more artful among them set out to meet him, for the purpose of drawing him into a negotiation. They had the address to bring over to their views a number of Luther's friends, among whom was the excellent Martin Bucer, persuading them that a compromise might be easily effected. Luther had reached Oppenheim, when Bucer met him and proposed to him the plan of a negotiation. "The emperor's confessor," said he, "desires a conference with you. His influence with his master is unbounded. Through him we are assured that every thing may yet be arranged." To this proposal, the friends who were with Luther knew not what to say; but he saw through the design at once. His safe-conduct protected him only three days more, and he had no time for parleying. "Tell the emperor's confessor," said he, "that if he has any thing to say, he will find me at Worms. I repair to the place of summons."

Meanwhile, Spalatin himself began to be disturbed with fearful apprehensions. He was with the elector at the diet, and he heard it said, on all sides, that the heretic's safe-conduct would be disregarded. His friendship took the alarm; and just as Luther was approaching the city, he sent out a servant to meet him, with the message, "Abstain from entering Worms." It was on this occasion that Luther made to the servant the following memorable declaration: "Go tell your master, that though there were as many devils at Worms as there are tiles on the roofs of the houses, I would enter the city." The messenger returned with the astounding declaration. The intrepidity of Luther seemed to impart new life and courage to his friends.

It was on the morning of the 16th of April that Luther discovered the walls of the ancient city. All were expecting him. Not less than a hundred individuals, nobles, cavaliers, and other gentlemen, rode out to meet him, and, surrounding his carriage, escorted him to the gates. At ten o'clock he entered within those walls, whence so many had predicted that he never would depart. A train of two thousand persons accompanied him through the streets of the city. The crowd seemed to increase at every step, and was even greater than at the public entry of the emperor. At last the herald of the empire stopped before the hotel of the Knights of Rhodes, where lodgings had been provided for him. As Luther alighted from his carriage, he exclaimed, "God will be my defence."

The news of his arrival was received with alarm by many, both friends and enemies, and with the deepest interest by all. The emperor immediately convened his confidential advisers, to know what must be done. The Bishop of Palermo advised, "Let your majesty rid yourself of this man at once. Did not Sigismund bring John Huss to the stake? One is under no obligation either to give or to observe a safe-conduct, in the case of heretics." But Charles could not consent to such diabolical counsel. It was, therefore, agreed that the reformer must be heard.

Meanwhile, crowds continued to gather outside the hotel of Rhodes; some regarding Luther as a prodigy of wisdom, others, as a monster of iniquity; but all anxious to see the man who had excited so deep an interest. Counts, barons, knights, gentlemen, ecclesiastics, citizens of all classes, thronged his apartments. All seemed struck with his courageous bearing; the joy of his countenance; the power of his eloquence, and the solemn elevation and enthusiasm which pervaded his whole demeanour. Some ascribed this grandeur to a kind of inspiration; while others as strenuously urged that he was possessed with the devil.

The next morning, April 17th, the marshal of the empire cited him to appear at four o'clock in the afternoon, in presence of his imperial majesty and of the states of the empire. The summons was received by Luther with profound respect, though he was at that time suffering under an unusual degree of darkness and depression of soul. God's face seemed to be veiled; and his faith, for the time, forsook him. His enemies multiplied before him, and his imagination was overcome by the aspect of his dangers. In that hour of bitter trial—an hour which, to him, was the garden of Gethsemane—he prostrated himself with his face to the earth, and poured out the following most remarkable prayer: "O God! Almighty and everlasting God! how dreadful is the world! Behold, how its mouth opens to swallow me up, and how small is my faith in thee!

"O, the weakness of the flesh and the power of Satan! If I am to depend on any strength of this world, all is over. The knell is struck —sentence is gone forth.

"O God! O thou my God! help me against all the wisdom of this world. Do this, I beseech thee. Thou *shouldest* do this by thine own power. The work is not *mine*, but *thine*. *I* have no business here; *I* have nothing to contend for with these great men of the world. I would gladly pass my days in happiness and peace. But the cause is *thine;* and it is righteous and everlasting. O Lord, help me! O faithful and unchangeable God, help me! I lean not upon man; it were vain. Whatever is from man is tottering. Whatever proceeds from him must fail.

"My God! my God! dost thou not hear? Art thou no longer living? Nay, thou canst not die. Thou dost but *hide* thyself. Thou hast chosen me for this work—I know it; therefore, O God, accomplish thine own will. Forsake me not, for the sake of thy well-beloved Son, Jesus Christ, my defence, my buckler, and my strong-hold."

After a moment of silent wrestling, the suppliant continued: "Lord, where art thou?

My God, where art thou? Come, I pray thee, for I am ready. Behold me, prepared to lay down my life for thy truth, like a suffering lamb, for the cause is holy; it is thine own cause.

"I will not let thee go—not for all eternity. And though the world should be thronged with devils, and this body (which is the work of thine hands) should be cast forth, cut in pieces, trodden under foot, consumed to ashes; *my soul is thine.* Yes, I have thine own word to assure me of it. My *soul* belongs to thee, and will abide with thee forever and ever. Amen and amen."

This prayer (the like to which, perhaps, has never been recorded by any uninspired pen) discloses to us Luther and the Reformation. History here lifts the veil of the sanctuary, and discovers the secret source whence strength and courage descended to the humble and despised individual who was employed as God's instrument to disenthral the human soul and open a new age. The springs of Luther's energies lie open before us. We see where his great power lay.

At four o'clock the marshal of the empire appeared, and Luther prepared to accompany him. His prayer had been heard, and his mind was now calm and tranquil. As he passed out from his hotel, the crowd that thronged the streets was even more dense than on the preceding evening. It was not possible to advance. It was in vain that orders were given to make way; the crowd increased every moment. At length the marshal, despairing of being able to proceed in the streets, demanded admission into some private houses, and conducted Luther through the gardens and back ways to the place where the diet was assembled.

Arrived at the Town Hall, the marshal found it impossible to pass the gateway, so thronged was it by the multitude. "Make room!" was the cry; but no one stirred, until the imperial soldiers pressed forward and cleared a passage with their halberds. And when the door was entered, the crowd was as suffocating as before. In the antechambers and window-recesses there were not less than five thousand spectators, German, Italian, Spanish, and of other nations.

But the intervening difficulties were at length overcome, and Luther was ushered into the presence of his judges. Never had any man appeared before a more august assembly. The Emperor Charles, whose dominions extended across both hemispheres; his brother, the Archduke Ferdinand of Austria; six electors of the empire; twenty-four dukes; eight margraves; thirty archbishops, bishops and prelates: seven ambassadors, including those of France and England; the deputies of ten free cities; several princes, counts and barons of rank; the pope's legates; in all two hundred persons. Such was the imposing assemblage before which stood Martin Luther.

His very appearance there was itself a victory over the papacy. The man whom the pope has adjudged a heretic, and by two separate bulls has excommunicated, stands before a tribunal, raised by that very fact above the pope's authority. Placed under an interdict, and struck out from human fellowship by the decrees of Rome, he is received before the noblest of human auditories. When the pope has declared that his lips shall be sealed forever, he is about to open them in the presence of thousands, assembled from the remotest countries of Christendom.

When Luther had advanced to the foot of the imperial throne, where he was directed to stand until some questions should be put to him, the chancellor of the Archbishop of Treves addressed him as follows, speaking first in Latin and then in German: "Martin Luther, his sacred and invincible majesty has cited you before his throne, acting on the opinion and advice of the states of the holy Roman empire, to require you to answer to these questions: First, Do you acknowledge these writings to have been composed by you?"—pointing, at the same time, with his finger to about twenty volumes, placed on a table in the centre of the hall. "Secondly, Are you prepared to retract these works, and the propositions contained therein; or do you persist in what you have advanced?"

Luther was about to answer the first of these questions in the affirmative, when Jerome Schurff, who acted as his counsellor, interrupted him and said, "Let the titles of the books first be read." The dexterous lawyer took this method of bringing into notice the religious and unexceptionable subjects of many of these works. For as the chancellor read over the titles, there appeared among them commentaries on the Psalms ; a little tract on good works ; a commentary on the Lord's prayer ; and other books on topics in no way related to the controversy. When the reading was finished, Luther replied, first in Latin and then in German :

" Most gracious emperor, princes and lords ; his imperial majesty puts to me two questions. As to the first, I acknowledge the books, the titles of which have been read (unless they shall have been mutilated and altered) to be of my writing. I cannot deny them. As to the second, seeing that it is a question which has reference to faith and the salvation of souls, I should act rashly, if I were to answer without reflection. I might say less than the circumstance demands, or more than truth requires ; and so sin against Christ. Therefore, I most humbly desire his imperial majesty to allow me time, that I may answer without offending against the word of God."

This reasonable request, after some deliberation, was granted. Luther was allowed to defer his answer till the next day, on the express condition, however, that he should deliver what he had to say by word of mouth, and not in writing.

The enemies of Luther were much encouraged by his request for delay. "He had begged for time," said they. "He is going to retract. At a distance, his speech was arrogant; but now his courage forsakes him. He is fairly conquered."

Some of his friends advised him to retract his errors in point of doctrine, but to adhere to all that he had said concerning the pontiff and the court of Rome. But he was determined to make no recantation. "By the help of Jesus Christ," said he, after having returned to his hotel, "I will not retract a single letter of my writings."

The interval between his first and second appearance before the diet, Luther employed in preparing his final answer, and in preparing his soul for the great issue. As the moment approached when he was to go again into the presence of his judges, he drew near to the table, on which lay an open Bible, and placing his left hand upon it, he raised the other towards heaven; and here he vowed to adhere to the gospel constantly, and confess his faith freely, though he should be called to seal his confession with his blood This done, his countenance shone, and his heart was dilated with holy joy.

At the time appointed, Luther was conducted again to the hall where the diet was assembled. He was obliged to wait two hours in the court, surrounded by a dense crowd, before he could gain admittance. To an ordinary man, this must have been not only a severe trial, but a grievous hindrance to preparedness of mind. But in the midst of the crowd, Luther was walking alone with God. His look was serene and his features unruffled. The Eternal was placing him on the rock.

At length, however, he was admitted; and the chancellor of the Archbishop of Treves demanded of him whether he wished to retract any part of his writings, or whether he was determined to defend them. Whereupon Luther, in a tone of humility and mildness, but yet with inflexible Christian firmness, made the following answer:

" Most serene emperor, and you, illustrious princes and gracious lords; I this day appear before you, in all humility, according to your command, and I implore your majesty, and your august highnesses, by the mercies of God, to listen with favour to the defence of a cause which I am well assured is just and right. I ask pardon if, by reason of my ignorance, I am wanting in the manners that befit a court; for I have not been brought up in kings' palaces, but in the seclusion of a cloister.

"Two questions were put to me yesterday by his imperial majesty; the first of which I answered, and to that answer I adhere. As to the second, I have composed writings on very different subjects. In some, I have discussed faith and good works, in a spirit so pure, clear, and Christian, that my adversaries themselves, far from finding anything to censure, confess that these writings are profitable, and deserve to be perused by devout persons. Even the pope's bull acknowledges as much as this. What then should I be doing, if I were now to retract these writings? I alone, wretched man! should be found abandoning truths approved by the unanimous voice of friends and enemies, and opposing doctrines which the whole world glories in confessing.

"I have, in the second place, composed certain works against popery; wherein I have attacked those who, by false doctrines, irregular lives, and scandalous examples, afflict the Christian world, and ruin the bodies and souls of men. And is not this confirmed by the grief of all who fear God? Is it not manifest that the laws and doctrines of the popes entangle, vex, and distress the consciences of the faithful; whilst the crying and endless extortions of Rome ingulph the property and wealth of Christendom, and more particularly of this illustrious nation? If I were to revoke what I have written against popery, should I not strengthen this tyranny, and open a wider door to so many and flagrant impieties? And then we should behold these proud men, bearing down all resistance—swelling, foaming and raging more than ever. And not only would the yoke which now weighs us down be made more grinding by my retractation, it would, so to speak, become legitimated; since it would thereby receive confirmation from your most serene majesty and all the states of the empire. And I should become like an infamous cloak, used to hide and cover over every species of malice and tyranny.

"In the third and last place, I have written some books against private individuals, who had undertaken to defend the tyranny of Rome, by destroying the faith. I freely confess that I may have attacked such persons with more violence than was consistent with my profession as an ecclesiastic. I do not think of myself as a saint. But neither can I retract these books; because, by so doing, I should sanction the impieties of my opponents, who would thence take occasion to crush the people of God with still more cruelty. Yet, as I am a mere man, and not God, I will defend myself after the example of Christ, who said, *If I have spoken evil, bear witness against me.* How much more should I, who am but dust and ashes, and so prone to error, desire that every one should bring forward what he can against my doctrine. Therefore, most serene emperor, and you, illustrious princes, and all who hear me, whether high or low; I implore you, by the mercies of God, to prove to me, by the writings of the prophets and apostles, that I am in error. As soon as I shall be convinced I will instantly retract all my errors, and will myself be the first to seize my writings, and commit them to the flames."

Luther proceeded to warn his august auditors lest, in their endeavours to arrest discords, they should be found to fight against the holy word of God, and thus bring down upon their heads a frightful deluge of present dangers and disasters, and everlasting desolations. "Let us beware," said he, "lest the reign of the young and noble prince, the Emperor Charles, on whom (next to God) we build so many hopes, should not only commence, but continue and terminate its course, under the most fatal auspices. I might cite many examples drawn from the word of God. I might tell of ancient monarchs of Egypt, of Babylon, and of Israel, who were never more directly contributing to their own ruin, than when, by measures apparently the most prudent, they thought to establish their own authority. God removeth the mountains, and they know it not. Job ix. 5.

"In speaking thus, I do not suppose that such noble princes have need of my poor judgment. But I wish to acquit myself of a duty that Germany has a right to expect from her children. And so commending myself to your august majesty, and your most serene highnesses, I beseech you, in all humility, not to permit the hatred of my enemies to rain upon me an indignation which I have not deserved."

When Luther had delivered his answer in German, he was requested to repeat the same in Latin. And after a moment's respite and recollection, he complied; a circumstance which is said to have been highly gratifying to the Elector of Saxony.

As soon as he was through, the Chancellor of Treves, who acted as speaker of the assembly, addressed him angrily, as follows: "You have not given any answer to the inquiry put to you. You are not to question the decisions of councils, but to return a clear and distinct answer, Will you, or will you not, retract?"

To this demand Luther promptly replied: "Since your most serene majesty, and your high mightinesses require of me a clear and direct answer, I will give one, and it is this: I cannot submit my faith either to the pope or the councils; because it is as clear as noonday, that they have often fallen into error, and even into glaring inconsistency with themselves. If, then, I am not convinced from the Holy Scriptures, or from reason, and my judgment is not brought in this way into subjection to God's word, *I neither can nor will retract any thing;* for it cannot be right for a Christian to speak against his conscience." Then turning a look on that assembly before which he stood, and which held in its hands his life or his death, he added, "Here I stand, and can say no more. God help me. Amen."

At this conclusion, the assembly seemed motionless with astonishment. Several of the princes could scarcely conceal their admiration. Even the emperor spoke of the monk's "intrepid heart and unshaken courage." After a few moments, the chancellor resumed: "If you do not retract, the emperor and the princes will proceed to consider in what manner to deal with an obstinate heretic." To which Luther replied, "The Lord be my helper! I can retract nothing."

When he had said this, Luther withdrew from the diet, and left the princes to deliberate by themselves. After a little time, however, he was recalled, when the chancellor thus addressed him: "Martin, you have not spoken with that humility which befits your condition. The distinctions you have made respecting your works are needless; for if you retract such as contain errors, the emperor will not suffer the rest to be burned. It is absurd to require to be refuted by Scripture, when you are reviving heresies condemned by the general council of Constance. The emperor requires you to say, yes or no, whether you mean to affirm what you have advanced, or whether you desire to retract any thing." "I have no answer to give," replied Luther, "except that I have already given." The assembly understood him. Not only the energy of his words, but his countenance, his eye, and the inflexible firmness depicted on his rude German features, all proclaimed that there was no longer any hope of his submission. The assembly adjourned at once, to meet next morning to hear the emperor's decision.

The impression produced by the address and demeanour of Luther before the diet was deep and powerful. The Elector of Saxony was delighted with him, and was evidently proud of having such a veteran under his patronage. He resolved from this time to afford him a more efficient protection. Other members of the diet were won over to his cause by the tone of deep conviction with which he had defended it, and became, at a later period, the decided patrons of the Reformation.

The emperor, however, found it impossible to divest himself of his prejudices and of the various ensnaring influences with which he was surrounded. The day following, when the diet came together, he caused to be read the following declaration, which he had written with his own hand: "Descended from the Christian emperors of Germany, from the Catholic kings of Spain, from the archdukes of Austria, and the dukes of Burgundy, all of whom have distinguished themselves as defenders of the faith of Rome, I am firmly resolved to tread in the footsteps of my ancestors. A single monk, led astray by his own madness, erects himself against the faith of Christendom. I will sacrifice my kingdoms, my power, my friends, my treasure, my body and blood, my thoughts and my life, to stay the farther progress of this impiety. I am about to dismiss Luther, forbidding him to make the least disturbance among the people. I will then take measures against him and his adherents, as open heretics, by excommunication, by interdict, and every means necessary to their destruction. I call on the members of the States to comport themselves as faithful Christians."

This indiscreet declaration on the part of the emperor, which was owing in some degree to his want of experience, but more to the solicitations of Aleander and his friends, produced complaints and murmurs in the assembly. By giving his opinion first, the emperor had broken the established rules of the diet. He ought first to have consulted with the members, and made himself acquainted with their views. By this hasty procedure, the cause of Luther was prejudged, and the right of the princes to act freely in the matter before them was taken away. Party spirit ran high at this time. Acrimonious papers on both sides of the question were publicly affixed to the walls, and the most violent expressions are said to have been used. Those on one side of the question were disposed to regard Luther favourably, and to extend to him all the protection in their power; while Aleander and his party were for killing him outright. The safe-conduct, they said, ought not to be respected. He ought to be burnt, like John Huss, and his ashes to be thrown into the Rhine. But this frightful, disgraceful proposal found little favour among the Germans. Even Duke George exclaimed, "The German princes will not endure the violation of a safe-conduct. Such perfidy befits not the ancient faith of the Germans."

These discussions continued for two days, during which no official information was sent to Luther respecting a matter in which he was so deeply interested; and during which the most frightful reports were put in circulation, and various plans were adopted, both for his destruction and his defence. The matter was at length compromised in the diet, in this way: Charles consented that the heretic should be allowed a few days' delay, in which time such of the princes as pleased might endeavour to persuade him to recant his errors; and if they succeeded, he promised that he himself would take care that he should be pardoned by the Roman pontiff. Accordingly, incredible pains were taken, during the next two or three days, by princes, electors, and deputies of various orders, friends and foes, to shake the resolution of this hero of the Reformation. The Archbishop of Treves, a staunch Romanist, but a man of gentle manners and humane disposition, was particularly earnest in these negotiations. It was probably far more difficult for Luther to resist the kind entreaties and expostulations with which he was now assailed, than to confront all the threats of power, and the terrors of a public hearing before the diet of the empire. But neither exhortations nor promises, flatteries nor frowns, availed to change his resolution, or move him from the answer he had so often given. He persisted in saying that, rather than give up the word of God, when the case was clear, he would lose his life.

At one time, during these negotiations, the Dean of Frankfort, a violent papist, proposed a public discussion to Luther, provided he would forego his safe-conduct. This malicious proposition placed the reformer in a critical dilemma. Nothing could be more desirable to him than a public discussion; but to give up his safe-conduct would probably be to throw away his life—which his enemies of all things most wished him to do. On the other hand, to decline the challenge of the dean would be to bring his cause into doubt and disgrace. A friendly knight, who was sitting by when the proposal was made, understanding at once its nature and design, and roused to indignation at the thought of such a stratagem, extricated Luther from his embarrassment in a summary way. Seizing the terrified dean by the throat, he turned him out of doors, and might have shed his blood, had he not been prevented by the interposition of others.

When all other plans of compromise had failed, Luther was urged by his friends to appeal to a general council. He consented; but it was on the express condition that the council should decide according to the Scriptures—a condition to which he well knew the papists would not accede.

The Archbishop of Treves, having exhausted all his wisdom in endeavouring to heal the difficulty, at length appealed to Luther and said, "What remedy would you propose for the evil?" After a moment's pause, the reformer replied, "I know of no remedy but what is found in that word of Gamaliel, 'If this work be of men, it will come to nought. But if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it, lest haply ye be found even to fight against God.' I feel perfectly sure, that this agitation and controversy will of itself die away in less than two years, unless God be actually on my side."

In about three hours after this conversation, Luther received a message from the emperor as follows: "Martin Luther, his Imperial Majesty, the Electors, Princes and States of the empire, having repeatedly and in various ways, but without success, exhorted you to submission, the emperor, in his character of defender of the Catholic faith, finds himself compelled to resort to other measures. He therefore orders you to return to the place whence you came, pledging the public faith for your safety during the space of twenty-one days. And he prohibits you from disturbing the public peace on your journey, either by preaching or writing."

Luther was well aware that this message was the precursor of his condemnation. "It has happened unto me," he replied, "according to the will of the eternal God; and blessed be his name." By the same individuals who brought to him the above message from the emperor, he returned the following answer: "I humbly, and from the bottom of my heart, thank his Majesty, the Electors, Princes and States of the empire, that they have given me so gracious a hearing. I have not, and never have had, a wish but for one thing, viz. a reformation of the church according to the Holy Scriptures. I am ready to do or to suffer all things in obedience to the emperor's will. Life or death, honour or dishonour, I will bear. I make but one reservation—the preaching of the gospel. The word of God must not be bound."

On Friday morning, April 26th, Luther gave his blessing to those around him, and left Worms. Twenty gentlemen on horseback surrounded his carriage. A crowd accompanied him outside the city. As he passed those walls, which many had predicted would become his tomb, his heart overflowed with gratitude and praise to God. "The devil has been obliged to confess," he said, "that Christ is mightier than he."

Luther's appearance, his firmness, his defence at Worms, and his escape from the mortal enemies who there surrounded him, have justly been considered as the noblest of his victories; or rather, as the greatest triumph of that divine word for which he contended, and by which he was delivered. "Armed with the word of God alone, he had encountered, first, Tetzel and his numerous host, and after a brief resistance, those greedy traffickers had been driven from the field;—then, the Roman legate at Augsburg, and the legate, in confusion, had been compelled to relinquish his prey;—then again, Eck and his learned divines in the halls of Leipsic, and the astonished theologians had seen the weapons of their scholastic logic shivered in their hands;—and when the pope himself had started from his slumbers to launch his fiercest lightnings at the head of the unoffending monk, that same word had again been the safeguard of him who trusted in it, and the arm of the spiritual despot had been stricken with palsy. One struggle more remained to be endured. The divine word was destined to triumph over the emperor of the West—over the kings and princes of so many lands; and this was the splendid triumph achieved at Worms.

"The conflict at Worms resounded far and near; and as the report of it traversed Europe, from the northern countries to the mountains of Switzerland, and through the towns of England, France and Italy, many seized, with new eagerness and confidence, the mighty weapons of the word of God."

CHAPTER X.

Luther pursues his journey towards Wittemberg—Writes to the emperor—Visits his relatives at Mora—Is captured and confined in the castle of Wartburg—His condemnation at Worms—The edict disregarded in Germany—Reasons for this—Great excitement on account of Luther's supposed imprisonment or death—Luther's despondency in the castle—Is allowed more liberty—His studies and labours—His publications—He humbles the Archbishop of Mentz—He commences translating the Scriptures—His conflicts with the adversary—His writings censured by the University of Paris—Melancthon replies to the Doctors of the Sorbonne—Outward progress of the Reformation—Priests begin to enter the marriage state—The mass gives place to the Lord's supper—The monks quit their cloisters and return to society—The fanatical prophets—Melancthon and Luther declare against them—Carlstadt is taken with them—Luther's presence needed at Wittemberg—He leaves his castle, and returns.

At the close of the last chapter, we left Luther commencing his return from Worms to Wittemberg. Arrived at Frankfort, he found time to write the following brief but strongly characteristic letter, in reference to what had been done at Worms. "I expected his majesty would assemble fifty learned doctors, to convict the monk outright. But not at all. 'Are these books of your writing? Yes. Will you retract them? No. Well, begone!' There is the whole history. Deluded Germans! How childishly we act! How are we duped and defrauded by Rome! Let the Jews sing their Io! Io! Io![*] But a passover is coming for us also, and then we will sing Hallelujah! We must keep silence and endure for a short time. 'A little while and ye shall not see me, and again a little while and ye shall see me,' said Jesus Christ. I trust I may say the same.[†] Farewell. I commend you all to the Eternal. May he preserve your understanding and faith from the attacks of the wolves and the dragons of Rome."

Still pursuing his journey, Luther found time, the morning after having written the above letter, to address messages to the emperor, and also to the princes, whom he had left at Worms. In these papers, he explains clearly the obedience which the Christian owes to his sovereign, and that which is due to God; and marks the point at which the former must give place to the latter. "God is my witness," said he, "that I am ready with all my heart to obey your majesty, through good or evil report, in life or in death, excepting only the word of God. In all the affairs of this life my fidelity shall be unshaken; for in these, loss or gain has nothing to do with salvation. But that man should be subject to man in what pertains to eternal life, is contrary to the will of God. Subjection in spirituals is a real worship, which should be rendered only to the Creator."

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[*] The supposed shouts of the Jews at the crucifixion of Christ.

[†] We have strong incidental proof that the plan of Luther's subsequent confinement had now been disclosed to him.

At Hirschfeld, Luther was received with distinguished honour by the Prince Abbot of the city, and was invited to preach. The prince and his suite attended the sermon. The next day, he arrived at Eisenach, the scene of his childhood, where he also preached, though not without some opposition from the curate. At Eisenach he parted from most of his attendants, who took the direct road to Wittemberg, while he, accompanied only by Amsdorff, turned aside to the village of Mora, that he might visit an aged grandmother and uncle.

He spent the following day with his relatives, in a degree of quietness which was the more grateful, on account of the turmoils through which he had passed. The next morning Luther resumed his journey, in company with Amsdorff, and his own brother James. They skirted the woods of Thuringen, taking the road that leads to Waltershausen. As they were passing a narrow defile, near the church of Glisbach, suddenly a noise was heard, and in a moment five horsemen, masked and armed from head to foot, fell upon them. His brother James, who seems not to have possessed the courage of Martin, leaped from the wagon in a great fright, and fled. Two of the assailants seized the driver and Amsdorff, and held them fast; while the other three took Luther from the wagon, threw a knight's cloak over him, and put him upon a horse which they had with them. This done, the whole five sprang into their saddles, leaving Amsdorff and the wagoner to shift for themselves, and in a moment they and their prisoner disappeared in the thick gloom of the forest. The news spread with the rapidity of lightning through all the towns and villages of the country, that Luther had been carried off. Some rejoiced at the re-

Engr. by M. Schmitz. T. Sinclair Lith Philadª

LUTHERS CAPTURE.

port, but the greater number were struck with astonishment and indignation; and soon a cry of grief resounded throughout Germany, "Luther has fallen into the hands of his enemies."

The party which had captured Luther continued in the forest during the day, pursuing a zig-zag course to avoid pursuit; but as soon as the shades of evening closed in, they took him directly to the ancient fortress or castle of Wartburg. This was a lofty isolated pile, situated on the summit of a hill, surrounded on all sides, except one, with the black forests of Thuringen. Here he was stripped of his ecclesiastical habit, and dressed throughout in the garb of a knight. He was commanded not to cut his beard or his hair, and the attendants of the castle were to know him only by the name of Knight George.

There is good reason to believe that this sudden capture and confinement of Luther was not a matter of surprise to himself. His great patron, the Elector of Saxony, knew not how to protect him in any other way; and the plan of a temporary concealment was confidentially disclosed to Luther a short time before his departure from Worms. Yet so artfully was the plan accomplished, and so deeply was the whole transaction involved in mystery, that even Frederic himself was for a long time ignorant of the place where Luther was concealed.

But we must return, for a moment, to the diet at Worms. Shortly after the departure of Luther, the Elector of Saxony, the Elector Palatine, the elector Archbishop of Cologne, and most of the German princes, who were favourable to the Reformation, left the place. The Italians and Spaniards, with the strongly Catholic princes, alone remained. Aleander was master of the field. He drew up an edict of condemnation against Luther, which the emperor approved, and which was adopted by such of the diet as remained, on the 25th of May. Yet, that it might seem to have been passed earlier, when the diet was full, it was ante-dated the 8th of May. After a brief introduction, the edict proceeds as follows :

" The Augustine monk, Martin Luther, has madly attacked the holy church, and attempted to destroy it by writings full of blasphemy. He has shamefully vilified the unalterable law of holy marriage ; has laboured to incite the laity to imbrue their hands in the blood of their priests ; and defying all authority, has incessantly excited the people to revolt, schism, war, murder, theft, incendiarism, and the utter destruction of the Christian faith. In a word, this being, who is no man, but Satan himself under the semblance of a man, has collected, in one offensive mass, all the worst heresies of former ages, adding his own to the number."

Having thus enumerated the offences of Luther, in which enumeration there is scarcely a syllable or semblance of truth, the emperor proceeds to forbid all persons to harbour him, to give him meat or drink, or in any way to aid or abet him. "We enjoin," says he, "that you seize him, or cause him to be seized, wherever he may be, and bring him before us without delay, or hold him in durance until you shall be informed how to deal with him, and have received the reward due to your co-operation in this holy work." His adherents were also to be seized, and their property confiscated. His writings were to be burned and destroyed. "And if any one shall dare to act contrary to this decree of our imperial majesty, we command that he be placed under the ban of the empire."

Such was the celebrated edict of Worms, which the diet had ratified, and the emperor had signed. The whole party of the Romanists shouted for joy. They exclaimed aloud, "The tragedy is over."

There were multitudes, however, in all parts of Germany, who thought differently. "This is not the last act of the tragedy," they said, "but the beginning." The Reformation, they saw, was deeply seated, not in one mind, but in many—in the very elements of the passing age; so that whatever might become of Luther, his cause was sure not to perish with him.

Notwithstanding the great pains which were taken to circulate the terrible edict of Worms, its abettors soon found that it was producing almost no effect. In France and the Low Countries a pile was sometimes kindled for the purpose of burning Luther's books; but in Germany they were read with increased avidity, and the cause which they advocated moved onward as smoothly as ever. The partisans of Rome complained that "before the ink of the signature had had time to dry, the imperial decree was virtually torn in pieces."

Several causes combined to break the force of this decree, and render it comparatively of no effect. One was the death of Pope Leo X., which occurred only a few months after the dissolution of the diet. Another was the political convulsions of the empire, which engrossed the whole attention of Charles, and rendered it impossible for him (if he had been so disposed) to execute his edict against Luther and the Reformation. Troubles almost immediately broke out in Spain, which compelled him to re-cross the Pyrenees. He was also involved in a war with his great rival, the King of France. And as though this were not enough, the Turks invaded Hungary. Thus attacked on all sides, Charles found himself compelled to leave the condemned monk and his religious novelties unmolested. But the chief cause which, more than all others, contributed to render powerless the decree at Worms, was the particular state of the public mind. This had been thoroughly impregnated with the doctrines of Luther, and he was regarded by his countrymen generally, not only as the great reformer of religion, but as the intrepid champion of their rights and liberties. In this state of things, to have executed rigidly upon him and his adherents the decree of the diet, had been well nigh an impossibility. If done at all, it could have been done only at the point of the sword, and with the certainty of desolating Germany.

Of this the Romanists had reason to be satisfied, from the excitement occasioned by the abduction of Luther, and his supposed imprisonment or death. All Germany was moved in view of what had been done. Rumors the most contradictory and painful were everywhere circulated. Men's minds were an hundred fold more agitated by the absence of the reformer, than they could have been by his presence. Not only knights and warriors, but men of peace, aged people, yea even women and children, were in a state of fearful excitement, and were resolved to avenge the reformer's death. The alarm of the Romish party was now as excessive as their joy had been on first hearing that Luther was taken out of the way. In many places they trembled with fear, and sought to hide themselves from the threatening anger of the populace. "The only way of extricating ourselves," wrote one of the Catholics to the Archbishop of Mentz, "is to light our torches, and go searching through the earth for Luther, until we can restore him to the nation that will have him."

On finding himself shut up in the castle of Wartburg, Luther passed several days in quiet repose, enjoying a leisure which had not for a long time been allowed him. He was at large within the fortress, but was not permitted to pass outside of it. All his wishes were complied with, and he had never been better treated. "Pray for me," he wrote to Spalatin. "I want nothing but your prayers. Don't disturb me with what is said or thought of me in the world. At last, I am quiet." Luther styled his castle "the isle of Patmos," and dated all his letters from thence accordingly.

But his tranquillity was not of long duration. Seated alone, day after day, within the walls of the Wartburg, he had seasons, as might have been expected, of extreme despondency. He was ready to exclaim, at times, "Lord, hast thou made all men in vain!" He often longed to be again on the field of battle, conflicting with the enemies both of himself and the gospel. "Rather," said he, "would I be stretched on burning coals, than stagnate here half dead." His health, also, which was feeble when he entered the castle, began soon to suffer from confinement and a change of diet. His table was too richly stored, and he found it indispensable to return to the poorer fare to which he had been accustomed. He often passed whole nights without sleep, suffering much in body, but more in mind; often moaning and crying aloud, like a heart-broken child. And then he would turn his sufferings, which he believed were inflicted for his good, into matter of solemn thanksgiving and praise. "I thank thee, O Christ, that thou dost not leave me without the precious relics of thy holy cross."

For the sake of his health, Luther was allowed, occasionally, a degree of liberty. The sides of the mountain on which the castle was built were covered, in many places, with wild strawberries, and he was permitted to walk out and gather them. Gradually he became still more venturesome, and clothed in his knight's armour, and attended by a faithful guard, he extended his excursions in the neighbourhood. In several instances, he joined the inmates of the castle in the sports of the chase; and in view of the eagerness with which they pursued their game, could not but think of the manner in which "the messengers of Antichrist hunt down and destroy deluded souls." On one occasion, he journeyed even to Wittemberg, and returned, without being discovered.

During his sojourn in the castle, Luther often reproached himself with indolence, but it should seem without any sufficient reason. Soon after his entrance there, he writes as follows: "I am going through the Bible in Hebrew and Greek. I mean to write a discourse in German touching auricular confession; also to continue the translation of the Psalms, and to compose a collection of sermons. My pen is never idle." His enemies thought that, if not dead, he was at least silenced; but he soon convinced them that he was still able to make his voice to be heard. For nearly a whole year, he continued to thunder from his mountain height—tract following tract in such rapid succession, that his astonished adversaries began to inquire whether there was not something supernatural in so prodigious an activity.

His promised discourse on auricular confession first appeared. "In support of this practice," says he, "the papists allege that passage in James, *Confess your sins one to another.* A strange confessor this, whose name is *one another.* It would follow that the confessors ought also to confess to their penitents, that every Christian, in his turn, should be pope, bishop and priest; and that the pope himself should make confession before all."

Luther next published his masterly reply to

Latomos, one of the divines of Louvain; in which he thus defends himself against the charge of lacking moderation. "The moderation of this age," says he, "consists in bending the knee before sacrilegious pontiffs, and impious sophists, and saying, 'Gracious lord,' and 'Most worthy master.' Having done this, you may persecute whom you will to death—you may convulse the world; this shall not hinder your being a man of moderation! Away with such moderation, say I. Let me speak out, and delude no one. The shell may be rough, perhaps, but the kernel is soft and tender."

In the autumn of this year Luther published a tract against monastic vows, which he dedicated to his aged father. In the course of the dedication he asks his father, "Do you still feel a desire to extricate me from a monk's life? You have a right to do so, for you are my father and I am still your son. But the effort is no longer needed. God has been beforehand with you in this matter. He has himself delivered me with his mighty arm. I am no longer a monk; I am a new creature—not of the pope, but of Jesus Christ."

While Luther was concealed, the Archbishop of Mentz commenced, at Halle, the sale of indulgences. Nothing could have roused the reformer to a higher pitch of indignation. "What!" said he, "when I have braved every danger, and the truth has triumphed, do they dare to trample it again in the dust? They shall soon hear that voice which once arrested their guilty traffic. I will take no rest, till I have attacked the idol of Mentz, and its abominations at Halle." Accordingly, he went to work with all speed, preparing his tract, "Against the new Idol of Halle."

When this was completed, and had been sent to Wittemberg, his friends there were alarmed at it. Its boldness and energy confounded them. They begged him to delay the publication, at least till he might write to the Archbishop of Mentz, and warn him of the thunderbolt that had been prepared for him. To this Luther consented, and wrote such a letter to the archbishop, who was also an elector and a cardinal, as no prince or ecclesiastical dignitary had ever before received. "Your highness," said he, "has seen fit to set up again the idol that ingulfs the treasure and the souls of poor Christians. You think, perhaps, that I am disabled, and that the power of the emperor will easily silence the protest of a feeble monk. But know this—I shall fearlessly discharge the duty that Christian charity lays me under, not dreading the gates of hell—much less popes, bishops, or cardinals. I humbly implore your electoral highness to call to mind the origin of this business, and how, from one little spark, there came such a fearful conflagration. The world then reposed in fancied security. 'That poor mendicant,' thought they, 'who, unaided, would attack the pope, has undertaken a task above his strength.' But God interposed his arm, and gave the pope more disturbance than he had ever known, since first he sat in the temple of God, and lorded it over God's church. That same God still lives. Let no one doubt it. And he will know how to bring to nought the efforts of a Cardinal of Mentz, although he were backed by four emperors: For it is his pleasure to bring down the lofty cedars, and humble the pride of the Pharaohs. I do, therefore, apprize your highness, that if the idol is not removed, it will be my duty, in obedience to God's teaching, publicly to rebuke your highness, as I have done the pope himself. Let not your highness neglect this notice. I shall wait fourteen days for an early and favourable answer. Given in my wilderness retreat, on Sunday after St. Catherine's day, 1521. Your highness's devoted and humble Martin Luther."

Such was the letter written by a solitary, incarcerated monk to a prince of the empire, and to one of the highest dignitaries in the Romish church. And what answer might he expect to receive? We know not all the workings of the archbishop's mind on this trying, momentous occasion; nor all the influences which wrought upon him. But we know what answer he did return. The fourteen days had scarcely expired, when he literally humbled himself at the feet of Luther, and consented so to lick the dust that the threatened tract was never published. The whole world, perhaps, does not furnish an instance of a more splendid triumph of Christian boldness and faithfulness, over truckling cupidity and spiritual wickedness in high places.

But Luther was destined to perform a more important work for his nation than any he had yet accomplished; and the foundations of this work were laid, and a considerable part of it completed, during his confinement in the Wartburg. It was to give to the Germans the Scriptures in their own mother tongue. Luther had translated some fragments of the sacred word before; for example, the seven penitential psalms. These portions had been extensively circulated, and had awakened a general desire for more. This earnest desire on the part of the people, the reformer regarded as a call from God; and he was resolved to meet it. He was now a captive, enclosed and secluded within lofty walls; and how could he better devote his leisure, than by rendering the word of God into the language of his nation? He commenced with the New Testament; and at the time of his enlargement, this was nearly ready for the press.

While engaged in this important work, the feelings of Luther seem to have been various. In general, he possessed strong consolation; finding in those pure pages to which his thoughts were directed that support and comfort which his soul required. But at times, he was terribly buffetted by the adversary, who feared as well as hated the work in which he was engaged, and was determined to drive him from it, if possible. It was while he was employed in his translation of the New Testament, that Luther was assailed by seeing apparitions of the wicked one. In imagination, "he saw him, rearing before him his gigantic form—lifting his finger, as if in threatening—grinning triumphantly, and grinding his teeth in fearful rage. One day, in particular, while Luther was translating, he thought that he saw Satan, in detestation of his work, tormenting and vexing him, and moving round him like a lion, ready to spring upon his prey. Aroused and alarmed, Luther snatched his inkstand, and threw it at the head of his enemy. The apparition vanished, and the ink-bottle was dashed to pieces against the wall. To this day, the keeper of the Wartburg regularly points out to travellers the mark made by Luther's inkstand."

It was while Luther was a captive, that the Sorbonne at Paris took ground against him. Influenced by the Dominicans, this celebrated school had extracted various propositions from his works, which they pronounced heretical. Among the condemned propositions were the following: "God ever pardons sin freely, and requires nothing from us in return, save that for the time to come we live according to righteousness." "The burning of heretics is contrary to the will of the Holy Ghost."

To these censures, Melancthon returned a spirited reply, in which he not merely stood on the defensive, but carried the war in the enemy's camp. The doctors of the Sorbonne had denounced Luther as a Manichean and a Montanist, and had called for fire and fagot to repress his madness. But Melancthon proved that his accusers were much more nearly allied to Manicheans and Montanists, and that the heresy was at Paris and Rome and not at Wittemberg.

During the captivity of Luther, the Reformation made a very perceptible progress, more especially in its outward developements. Up to this time, the constitution of the church, its ritual and discipline had undergone no material alteration. Even in Saxony and at Wittemberg, where the gospel had taken the deepest root, the papal ceremonies were continued as usual. The priest denounced the mass in his pulpit, but celebrated it at the altar. Friars and nuns continued to take upon themselves the prescribed vows, and enter the convents. Pastors lived single ; religious brotherhoods herded together ; pilgrimages were undertaken ; the faithful suspended their votive offerings on the pillars of the chapels ; and all the accustomed ceremonies were celebrated as before. It is evidence of the wisdom of Luther, and of his moderation, that the Reformation was commenced after this manner. He prepared the way for outward changes, before he urged them. Instead of pressing these changes prematurely and indiscreetly, and thereby creating revolution and confusion, he left them to come along as the natural and necessary results of the principles he had inculcated.

But the time had now arrived—the sooner, possibly, because of Luther's absence—when these results began to be manifested. Two of the German pastors, advocates of the reformed doctrines, entered into the marriage state. This step met with Luther's entire approbation. He was satisfied that priests ought to marry. But he was adverse, for a time, to extending the same liberty to monks and nuns. "The friars," he said, "had bound themselves by a deliberate vow. Of their own accord they had chosen a life of celibacy. Hence, they were not at liberty to withdraw from the obligations which they had voluntarily assumed." This reasoning is a sufficient answer to those who assert that the grand object of Luther in the Reformation was that he might marry. Up to this time, and for months afterwards, he had no thoughts of marrying, and no thought that he should ever be at liberty to marry. Nor was his mind changed in respect to this subject, until he was prepared to renounce the whole system of monkery, as opposed in its very nature to a free salvation, and to regard the enjoined vows as no other than bad promises, which might better be broken than kept. It was in November, 1521, that his mind first came to this conclusion; when he published his tract against monastic vows, to which we have already referred.

Another change was effected, shortly after that, respecting the marriage of priests. It was the change of the popish mass for the Christian sacrament of the Lord's supper. The agitation on this subject commenced in the Augustinian convent at Wittemberg; and all the inmates, the prior excepted, were found to be opposed to the mass. The elector and his court were alarmed at the proposed innovation; and a deputation from the university, among whom was Melancthon, repaired to the convent, for the purpose of reducing the monks to their former quiet state. The whole question was examined with much strictness and impartiality, and the professors were at length convinced that the monks had truth on their side. What now was to be done? Should they temporize, and conceal their convictions, or shall they speak out? Conscience pleaded on one side, and a doubtful expediency on the other; but they came at last to a courageous and honest decision. The university reported to the elector against the mass, and exhorted him to "put an end to all corruptions; lest, in the day of judgment, Christ should apply to the Saxons the rebukes he once pronounced upon Capernaum."

Nor was Melancthon satisfied with simply acceding to this report. He immediately put forth fifty-five propositions, calculated to settle the minds of inquirers on the subject. "The mass," says he, "is no sacrifice. There is but one sacrifice—but one satisfaction—Jesus Christ. Besides him there is none other. Let such bishops as do not withstand the profanations of the mass be anathema."

Still, the elector was not satisfied; and out of deference to his feelings, the contemplated change was deferred for a little season. But in face of the light that was then shining, the mass could not be long retained. On Christmas day, Carlstadt administered the Lord's supper, in both kinds, in the parochial church of Wittemberg. He did the same on New-year's day, and on the Sunday following; and from that time the ordinance was regularly observed.

Before the change here contemplated was fully accomplished, another was in agitation. The same Augustinian monks who first opposed the mass, began to oppose the monastic discipline and vows. "No one," they said, "who wears a cowl can be saved. Whoso enters a cloister enters into the service of the devil. Vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience to a superior, are contrary to the spirit of the gospel." Shortly after this, thirteen Augustine monks quitted the convent in one day, and throwing aside the habit of their order, assumed the dress of the laity. Such of them as had made some progress in learning continued their course of study, in hope of being one day useful to the church; while those who had made but little progress sought a livelihood by working with their own hands.

This bold step, like the others which preceded it, occasioned a general ferment in Wittemberg. The people wondered and rejoiced to see the monks thus cheerfully coming forward to share the labours of their fellow-citizens; whilst bitter reproaches were uttered against those who still obstinately clung to their indolent seclusion within the walls of the monastery. Shortly after this, a chapter or general meeting of the Augustinian monks was held at Wittemberg, in which it was determined that, as monastic vows are not sinful, on the one hand, so neither, on the other hand, are they obligatory. "In Christ," said they, "there is neither layman nor monk. Each one is free to leave the monastery, or to abide in it. Let him who leaves it beware how he abuses his liberty; let him who abides in it obey his superiors, but yet with the obedience of love." In this way, the question of vows was quietly settled, and the institution of monasticism was virtually prostrated before the rising power of truth.

But while these salutary changes, one after another, were taking place, and the reformation of the visible church was making progress, impure elements, as might have been expected, began to work. There were men at that time, as there are at all times, who were not satisfied with salutary reforms, especially if they had not been leaders in them, and who were bent on distinguishing themselves by pushing matters to dangerous extremes. Appearances of this nature first manifested themselves at Zwickau, a town of Saxony not far from Wittemberg. Individuals professed to be commissioned from heaven to complete that reformation which Luther had but feebly begun. "What," said they, "is the use of such close application to the Bible? Nothing is heard of but the Bible. Can the Bible preach to us? Can the Bible suffice for our instruction? If God had intended to instruct us by a book, would he not give us one direct from heaven? It is only the Spirit can enlighten. God himself has spoken to us by his Spirit, and taught us what to do and say."

Among the individuals who pretended to immediate revelation were Nicholas Storch, a weaver; Mark Stubner, who was a senior student at Wittemberg; and a noted fanatic whose name was Munzer. Of this new dispensation, it was revealed and agreed that Storch was to be the head. Accordingly, he chose him twelve apostles and seventy disciples, and gave out that apostles and prophets were again restored to the church. These men commenced their mission by denouncing woes and desolations upon the earth. "The day of the Lord draweth nigh! The end of all things is at hand! Within a few years, at farthest, the ungodly sinners shall all be destroyed, and the supreme power shall be given to Storch, who shall instal the saints in the government of the world."

From Zwickau they soon came to Wittemberg, and opened their dread commission there. At first, the professors and ministers, and even the elector, were puzzled with them; but soon Melancthon declared against them, and the elector "thought it most likely that the claims of the men of Zwickau were a temptation of the devil."

When Luther, in his castle, heard of the proceedings of these men, he penetrated the deceit at once. Writing to the elector respecting them, he says, "Your highness, in years past, was much engaged in collecting relics. Now God has heard your prayer, and sent you, at no cost or trouble of your own, a whole cross, with nails, spears, scourges, and all. Let your highness, then, spread out your arms, and endure the piercing of the nails in your flesh. I always expected that Satan would send us this plague." Luther, however, interceded for the fanatics, that they might not be persecuted. "Pray don't imprison them," wrote he to Spalatin. "Let not our beloved prince imbrue his hands in their blood." With all his vehemence, Luther was far before his age, and before many of the reformers with whom he acted, in the matter of religious toleration.

Carlstadt, who, in the absence of Luther, held a conspicuous place among the professors at Wittemberg, was rather taken with the new teachers. He did not receive all their doctrines, but deeply drank in the contagion of their enthusiasm. As the popish pictures and images had not yet been removed from the churches, he instigated the populace to carry them out by force; and not only so, but to burn and destroy them. He also began to pour contempt upon human learning. He neglected his studies, and went into the fields and workshops, that he might there receive the true interpretation of Scripture. He advised the students in the university to return to their homes, and resume the spade, and follow the plough. What was the use of their continuing their studies, since Storch and Munzer had never been to the university, and yet they were prophets. Other teachers at Wittemberg followed the example of Carlstadt, and advised the people to take their children from the schools. In consequence of these proceedings, some of the schools were literally broken up ; the university was likely to be deserted ; and the light of the Reformation might ere long go out in utter darkness.

Under these circumstances, the return of Luther to his former post of conflict and danger was loudly and all but universally demanded. The burghers and citizens were clamorous for his re-appearance. The divines felt their need of the benefit of his judgment. Even the prophets appealed to him as their patron, from whom they expected support and countenance. All, with the exception of the elector, and possibly of Carlstadt, united in the entreaty that he might return. The elector insisted that he should keep within the Wartburg, and prepare a justification to be presented at the approaching diet.

But when Luther was apprized of the critical state of affairs at Wittemberg, he resolved that he would remain concealed no longer. At all hazards, he would be at his post, and if he fell before his enemies, he would fall there. Accordingly, on the third of March he bade a final farewell to the castle of Wartburg, and to the gloomy forests by which it was surrounded. In the name of the Lord, he came forth from his hiding-place, and bent his steps again towards the haunts of men. He was still habited as a knight, and in nearly all places through which he passed was entirely unknown. In two or three instances, he was recognised, but those that knew him were his friends. After a journey of five days he arrived in safety at Wittemberg, where he was received with a sort of triumph. Doctors, students, burghers, peasants, all broke forth in rejoicings together: for they had now among them a pilot who, they believed, could extricate the vessel from the reefs and perils with which it was encompassed.

THE END.

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